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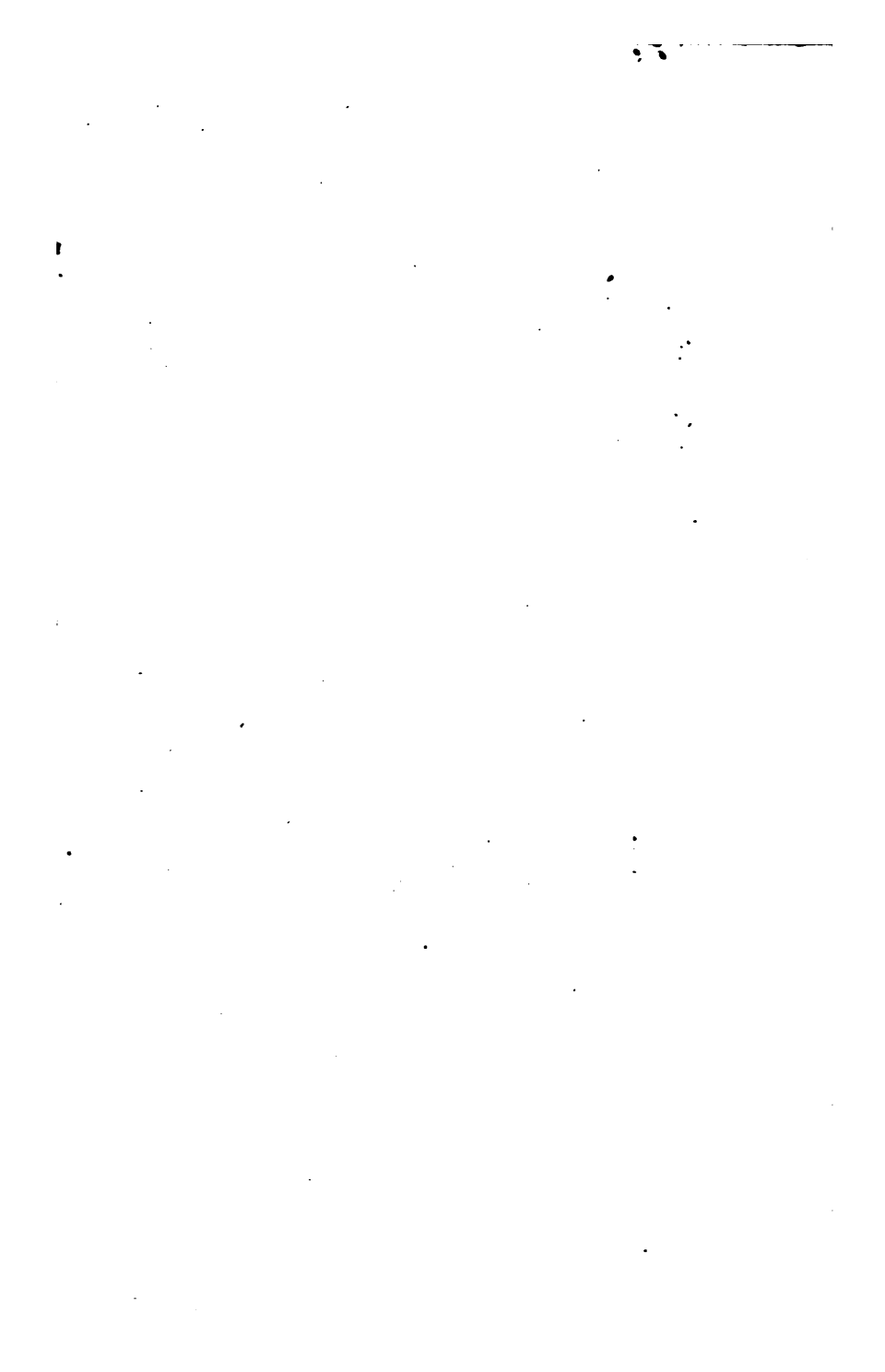
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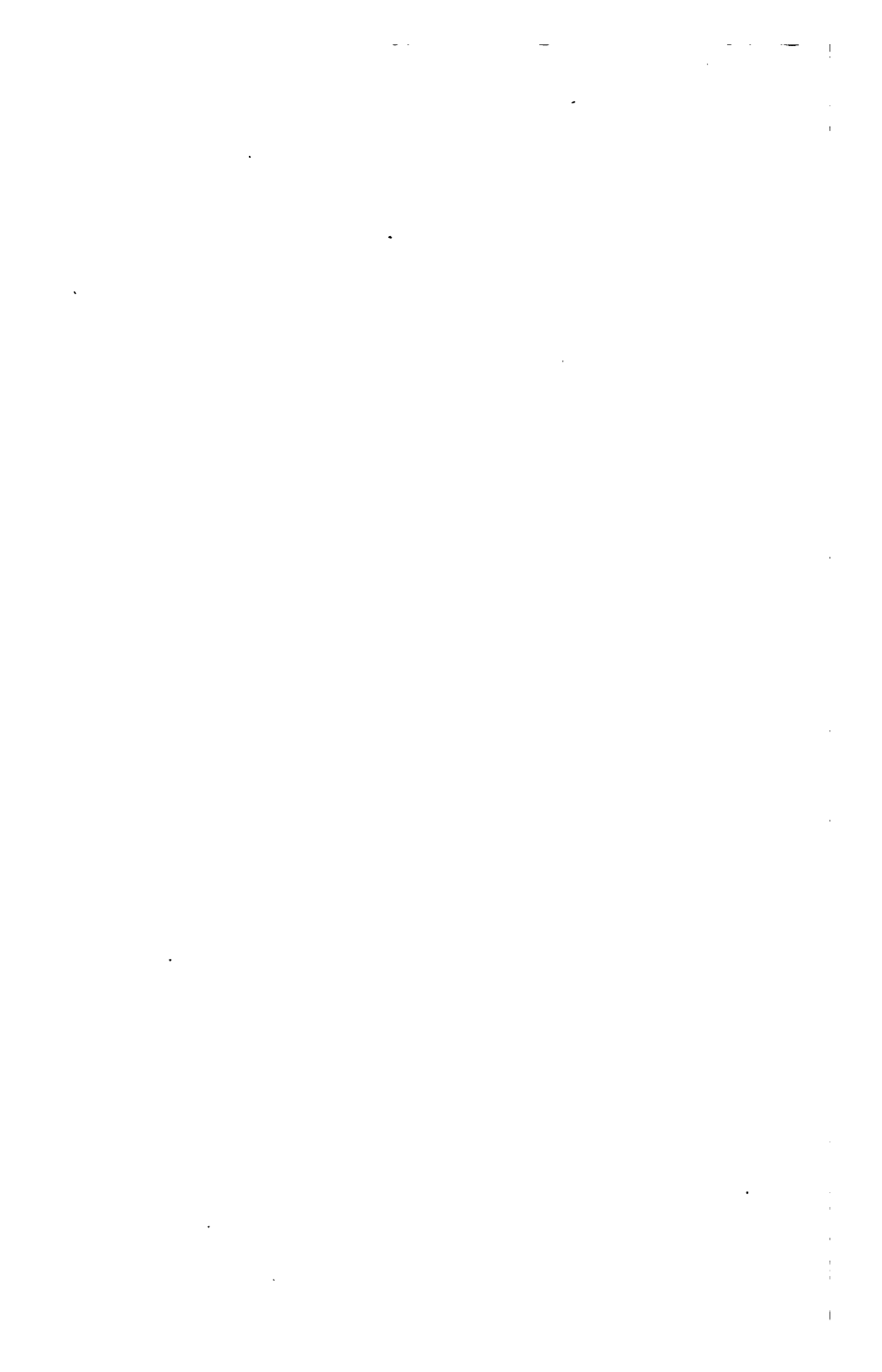
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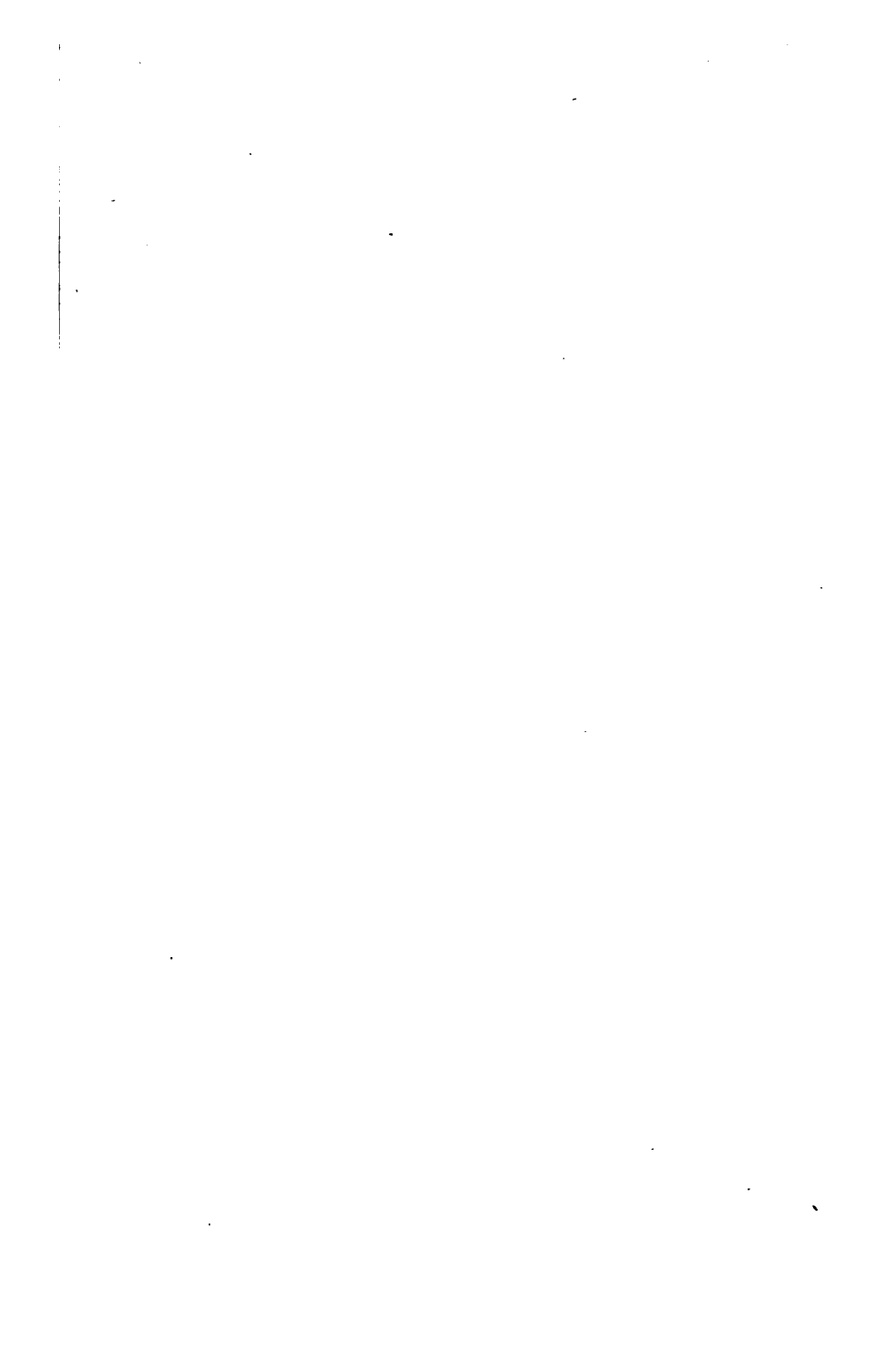
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ALMOST immediately on the restoration of its functions, the ancient magistracy began to give cause of uneasiness to the royal authority

which had re-established it. I shall not enter into a detail of these wretched dissensions, which merely go to prove that gratitude was a virtue with which that body had no acquaintance. The queen was the first to perceive this truth, and she confessed to me, in an unreserved moment, that she feared they had done wrong in not taking my advice.

“ Unfortunately, madam,” I replied, “ there is no retracing our steps. I only hope we may escape those evils which I too clearly see preparing; for much do I fear that the victors will make an ill use of their victory.”

My anticipations, however, could not go far enough to make me expect that in the fatal affair of the diamond necklace, the parliament would declare the real culprit not guilty, in order to cause the blame to fall on the queen. However, from this moment, up to the Revolution, Marie-Antoinette became the declared enemy of the magistracy. She contributed to its

suppression in 1788, wept its recall the following October, and did not seek to dissemble her joy when the constituent assembly decreed its final dissolution.

But at the commencement of 1775 the queen did not occupy herself as yet with such political considerations. Satisfied with reigning over the heart of her husband, as well as the most brilliant court in the world, her ambition did not extend beyond these objects. Pleasure was her only aim. She pursued it and yielded to its fascinations with a sort of intoxication, which her age only could have excused in the person of a queen. It was impossible that her dignity, and consequently her personal consideration, should not have suffered. The transit is easy in France, from adoration and servility to insolence: a middle term between fear and contempt is scarcely known.

The French had never before seen a queen go in a cabriolet to one of the theatres of the

capital. Till that time, the king's wives had never quitted Paris, except surrounded with imposing pomp and a long retinue of attendants. They exhibited themselves in public, magnificently dressed, sparkling with diamonds, and might have been taken for divinities, who occasionally descended from Olympus in order to receive the respectful homage of mortals.

Marie-Antoinette, on the contrary, exhibited herself to the people in a simple robe of muslin or taffety, attended by a lady or footman. Animated and communicative, she sunk the queen too much, in order to display the pretty woman. She was too lavish of her presence not to supply constant materials for commentary. From that time, malicious conjectures, and even calumnies, were not spared her; remarks were made on the persons who most commonly accompanied her; and her preference for the Duke de Coigny was construed into a more tender sentiment than friendship, because, consider-

ing herself beyond the reach of suspicion, she did not affect to conceal it.

I should not refer to these levities of demeanour, if they had not produced such fatal consequences: but I have heard so much regret expressed by individuals attached to the queen for the antipathy cherished by the Parisians towards her, that my object is not to justify it, but to explain it. Marie-Antoinette brought a thousand trifles into fashion, such as feathers, flowers, ribbons, and it was no fault of hers nor of the Count d'Artois, that there was not a complete revolution in the whole character of the costume of the epoch. Some silly busy-bodies, who thought to give themselves importance by making themselves ridiculous, persuaded my sister-in-law and the Count d'Artois, that the only method to set off the brilliancy of the crown, and the majesty of the throne, was to adopt a style of dress which, by its richness and its cut, could alone be adopted by the exclusive frequenters of the court

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ALMOST immediately on the restoration of its functions, the ancient magistracy began to give cause of uneasiness to the royal authority

bound, presented them to the archduke, when the latter paid a visit to the Jardin du Roi. The prince, whose attention was exclusively directed to the coloured plates, and not to the text, said, as he turned towards the author, "O sir, I cannot really accept such beautiful volumes; I should be exceedingly sorry to deprive you of them."

M. de Buffon did all he could to dispossess him of this erroneous fancy, but in vain. He quitted the cabinet of natural history with an especial injunction to his retinue, by no means to *deprive* M. de Buffon of *such beautiful volumes*.

We had a hearty laugh at Versailles at this droll fastidiousness of the archduke; and the queen appeared rather ashamed of it. His timid superstition precluded him from taking notice of the pretty women at court, and, strictly guided by his mother's instructions, he kept the philosophers at the greatest possible dis-

tance—never dropped one word on the subject of literature, and threw himself, bound hand and foot, into the Choiseul coterie. He went to sup *en famille* at the ex-minister's, where all the Lorrainers of the kingdom were assembled, and to have found fault with this arrangement would have been to have displeased Marie-Antoinette.

While the archduke was so easy of access to those for whom we had no affection, he acted in a directly opposite manner towards the princes of our family. He raised difficulties on points of etiquette, which greatly offended the branches of Orleans and Condé; and indeed carried things so far, that the customary visits were suspended, and that the princes, in dudgeon at his conduct, deserted Versailles during the whole time that he sojourned there.

I must confess that I could not see without some surprise this new-fangled haughtiness of the Lorraine family, pretending to set itself up in

rivalry against the ancient lineage of the Bourbons. I could have wished that the king, setting aside his relationship to Marie-Antoinette, had on this occasion sided with the princes of the blood, and declared that the Count de Burgen (the archduke's incognito) was bound to pay due respect to every member of the royal family. I spoke on this subject to my brother, who replied that the fear of disoblighing the queen was his sole reason for not following my opinion, which was in fact the same as his own.

Marie-Antoinette, on her side, brought the matter on the tapis, while we had no one with us but the Countesses d'Artois and Provence.

"What do you you think of the conduct of the princes with regard to my brother?"

"You should first ask me, madame," I replied, smiling, "what I think of the conduct of the archduke towards the princes."

"I might have expected," replied the queen, with an expression of pique, "that you would

have prejudged my brother to be in the wrong."

"But you can scarcely complain, madame," I replied with the same good humour, "of a proceeding in which you set me the example; for if it be natural for you to take the part of your brother, it is natural for me to take the part of the princes of the blood, my relations."

"But relationship should give way to justice; and in deciding in favour of my brother, I do so because I think him in the right."

"Since that is your opinion, madame, there would be little gallantry on my part in persisting to think him in the wrong; however, I may be permitted to say, that the Princes de Condé and Orleans were somewhat entitled by their birth to some attentions on the part of the archduke."

"For my part, I think that a son of Maria-Therese had good right to expect attention first, previous to paying it to others."

"But you have too much liberality, madame, not to make allowances for a little pride of family in the descendants of the house of Bourbon, who have reigned over the first throne in the world for eight hundred years; and I am persuaded that few sovereigns can trace their genealogy to so remote a period."

Marie-Antoinette bit her lips with vexation at not being ready with a reply sufficiently severe; then placing herself before the Countess d'Artois and her sister, she said, "Well, ladies, methinks we have some reason for boasting, insignificant princesses as we are, of having been selected to bear the distinguished honour of a union with the very ancient house of Bourbon."

"Ah! madame," replied my wife, with admirable discretion, "it is so long since that family and ours have contracted reciprocal alliances, that it appears to me as if we were one and the same."

I could almost have embraced my wife, so pleased was I with the presence of mind of her retort.

As to the queen, she intrenched herself in an air of imposing dignity, and made no further effort to prolong a conversation, which was so little to her taste. She was cool to me for a long time after; and I am inclined to think she never cordially forgave me.

M. de Burgen departed without leaving many regretful feelings behind him. He hastened his departure in order to go and canvass the electoral archbishopric of Cologne, which he subsequently obtained. In other respects, setting aside the tittle-tattle I have recorded, I have no occasion to say any thing to his disadvantage.

The Count d'Artois, who acted the principal part in a similar quarrel at a subsequent period, thought of nothing at that time but receiving the archduke with the respect due to his rank,

and invested his reception with all the characteristics of a young man who sets a high value on such puerile distinctions.

Although the king was always preaching up economy, D'Artois made his debut on this occasion by a *fête* which cost near a million; such lavish prodigality had never before been witnessed, even in the time of Louis XV. I grieved to see such considerable sums so uselessly expended, and made a remark on it to M. de Maurepas, who replied, "The Count d'Artois is a young man, and unacquainted with the value of money; but he will know better by and bye. As for you, monseigneur, you possess a discretion beyond your years."

"And on that account, I presume," said I, laughing, "I am to be limited in my means of spending."

The next day I received a treasury order for 600,000 francs. This attention of the Mentor was very acceptable. I employed the money in

the purchase of land, having no inclination to dissipate it in expensive trifles, or to abandon it to the avidity of those who surrounded my person. As soon as it was known, indeed, that I had received this accession of wealth, every body came to give me an account of some unexpected pecuniary disaster; but I turned a deaf ear to their tales, not wishing to be taken for a dupe, and the titled mendicants did not extract a penny of my money.

It was about this time, I believe, that the affair of the wig took place between the Count d'Artois and M. de Montyon. The latter was an eminently philanthropic man—a really honest man, like whom there are few examples. Having been appointed Intendant of various provinces in succession, he had fallen into disgrace under the late king, for having, in 1771, refused to proceed to the installation of the Maupeou magistracy. This disfavour only rendered him dearer to all that was estimable in the kingdom,

and Louis XVI., on his accession, treated him with deserved distinction.

M. de Montyon paid an early visit one morning at the Count d'Artois's—I forget on what account. This much is certain: that for want of meeting any servant to announce him, in blundering through one door after another, he at length stumbled on an apartment where he found a young man without his coat, his hair in disorder, and in a state of costume altogether *negligé*. The young man, surprised at the sight of a magistrate who suddenly presented himself, dressed in an enormous judicial wig, and of a most extraordinary cut, asked him rather roughly what was his business there?

M. de Montyon, imagining that he was addressing one of the footmen, told him that he was a pretty sort of a scamp to talk to him in that rude manner. He had scarcely dropped these disastrous words, when my young gentleman without his coat snatched his portentous

wig from his head, dusted the magistrate's face with it in the most pertinaciously attentive manner, and then laughing ready to split his sides, took to his heels and disappeared. The irritation of M. de Montyon may be easily conceived; his natural staid sobriety of demeanour was not proof against it; he stamped, and threw himself into a fit of passion till some of the attendants were brought to the spot by his outcries, and then the whole mystery was explained. In short, he found that he had just been assigning the epithet of a *scamp* to his royal highness the Count d'Artois. M. de Montyon, in a state of consternation, slipped off without making further inquiries; but not without professionally repeating that the law was open, and there was redress for every body.

This anecdote, which was related to the king, diverted him exceedingly; especially when he understood that my brother was the aggressor. He even thought that D'Artois should make

some kind of reparation to the mystified magistrate. This was done in the most cordial manner in the world: so much so, that when Bastard was discharged for his rogueries from his function of *chancelier* to the Count d'Artois, M. de Montyon, to the general satisfaction, was called to succeed him. On that occasion, my brother said to him, "I hope, sir, you will have the goodness to look over my levity."

"And I hope, monseigneur, that you will pardon my irritability."

From that time they were on the best terms: we met with this virtuous magistrate during our subsequent exile.

While the Count d'Artois set no bounds to his prodigal fooleries, the queen could never be accused of being behindhand in the same course. She was in debt before the end of the first year of her accession, and was quite astonished when she requested some advances from M. Turgot, that he went to consult the king pre-

vious to complying with her request. Louis XVI., who, as I have already stated, had sincere views of public economy, made no scruple of exclaiming against the exigences of Marie-Antoinette. He enjoined the comptroller-general to send the sum required to his private cabinet; and then requested the presence of the queen.

The queen came without any idea of the nature of the king's wish to see her. The king began by tasking her in an amicable manner respecting the employments to which she devoted her money; then presented the sum required; and finally conjured her not to dissipate it in useless expenditure. From that time, M. Turgot was treated with little charity in the queen's intimate circle. Attempts were made to exasperate that princess against him, and with such success, that she at length promised to do all she could to get him dismissed. This is the chief cause of the early withdrawal from

the ministry of that most able and honest minister, whom the state had such reason to regret, and will always regret.

Intriguing men were the most likely to succeed at court. The Count de Maurepas wanted a minister of war who would be entirely his tool; and for this purpose had cast his eyes on M. de Pezay, one of his subaltern flatterers, who was at that time invested with all his confidence. Wishing to get him into favour with the king, he advised him to write to that prince on various subjects likely to interest him. The first letters were unanswered; but De Pezay was not to be rebuffed—a single word was enough to encourage him. He continued his epistolary correspondence till he at last succeeded in his object, and the correspondence became reciprocal. Louis XVI. wished to have some information respecting Pezay: he applied to his mentor on the subject, who, in furtherance of his plan, spoke of him in terms of such

high eulogy, that his majesty requested the minister to give some employment to so meritorious a servant. This was the means of rising adopted by this adventurer, who, notwithstanding his disgrace, of which I shall have shortly to speak, would have succeeded in obtaining the department of war, if the court, subsequently better informed of his character, had not taken as great pains to prevent, as he had originally to procure him that acquisition.

Two contemporaneous public announcements occasioned attention at that epoch. The first was the marriage of our sister Clotilde with the hereditary prince of Piedmont; and the second the fact of the Countess d'Artois being *enccinte*. The intelligence was conveyed to us as quickly as if it were thought to be disagreeable. As for me, it could hardly interest me whether the Count d'Artois had children, since they would not exclude me from the throne, in case the

king had none. I therefore received the news with more satisfaction than chagrin.

I took it into my head to communicate the news to the queen, in order to remark how she received it. Accordingly I entered her apartment, and rubbing my hands, told her that we were about to have a new prince of the blood.

“And from what quarter is the new arrival to come?” asked Marie-Antoinette.

“From one of the highest,” I replied; “and I presume it will make no slight noise in the world.”

“Is the Countess de Provence, then, about to make you a father?” inquired the queen, in a tone of emotion.

“No, I am not so fortunate; but the Count d’Artois is more happy. The countess is *en-ciente*, although it is not yet wished to make it known.”

“She is very fortunate,” exclaimed the queen, suppressing a sigh. “All the good wishes of

the French people will be directed towards her. But are you quite sure of your news?"

I replied by a joke, which somewhat disconcerted Marie-Antoinette, accustomed as she was to my sallies. She however complained of the secrecy employed in withholding the event from her. I tranquillized her by replying, that I had only learnt the secret in a circuitous way, and she quitted me probably to communicate the news to the king.

CHAPTER II.

The Pregnancy of the Countess d'Artois does not please every body—The Count's entry into Paris—The reason of his Unpopularity—Nomination of Seven French Marshals—Jokes on their appointment—Firmness of M. de Mui—Kindness of Louis XVI.—Mutual animosity of the Marquis de Montesquiou and the Count de Modène—Mademoiselle Duthé—The Count d'Artois and M. Turgot—Revolt *des farines*.

THE expectation of a new heir was soon known at Versailles. The king seemed but half satisfied ; and the court sycophants could hardly conceive it possible that our sister-in-law could have the presumption to show so little deference to the queen, as to be in the family

way first. The king was almost fain to quarrel with the Countess d'Artois on the subject; and the latter felt herself bound to conceal her joy under an affected semblance of indifference.

In the meanwhile, the Count d'Artois wished to make his entry into Paris. This ceremony took place on the 7th of March, 1775. I learnt that his reception was cold, and that the Parisians were very sparing of their *Vivats*. My brother could not misunderstand their feelings, and accordingly he returned in a very bad humour. We judged the extent of his dissatisfaction by the satirical picture he drew of the people: and in this respect both parties were literally on a par; for he was alleged to have displayed a reserved, sarcastic, and ungracious expression of countenance. In fact, his pleasures were already the subject of animadversion, and he was attacked in prose and verse. This dislike to him, in the end, matured itself into more energetic manifestations of popular displeasure.

A few days after appeared the list of the new marshals of France, to the number of seven. Never did promotion give more general dissatisfaction: with the exception of M. de Muy, it consisted of such men as the Dukes de Fitz-James, D'Harcourt, De Noailles, De Duras, and the Counts de Nicolai and de Noailles—men without military talents or public reputation. They were accordingly compared to the seven cardinal sins; with this addition to the pasquinade, that it was intended to give them the seven planets for a device, only there was no Mars to be found among them.

On the 18th of March, the king granted, at my particular request, the governorship of the palace of Luxemburg to the Count de Modène, on the resignation of M. de Marigny.

I never let slip an opportunity to do a service to my more devoted attendants; and I may justly include Modène in the number. I admired the turn of his wit; he readily under-

stood mine, and accordingly after Montesquiou he stood the highest in my confidence. Each was jealous of the other: and there was no sort of Christian ill-turn that they would not have done each other. They each did their utmost to injure his rival in my estimation; but I turned a deaf ear to their detraction; I knew their good qualities, and that was enough for me. A prince should never listen to calumny of those he has regard for, unless he detects the truth himself. Besides, the more those who are attached to his person are divided among themselves, the better he is likely to be served.

The Count d'Artois devoted himself about this period to a lady renowned in the rites of Cytherea, the beautiful Duthé, who still lives, and who lately considered herself entitled, in consequence of her former connexion with my brother, to bring herself to my recollection. She was an extremely beautiful woman, and by no

means parsimonious of her charms to any body. She had already ruined a vast number of Englishmen. That, according to the wags, might have been deemed patriotism, only that her connexion was quite as fatal to the French nobility. But when a son of France did her the honour to place himself on her list of amorous victims, she considered the public purse as her own; however, she reckoned without her host on this occasion. My brother, though ignorant of the meaning of economy, was always surrounded by a crowd of persons all deeply interested in filling their purses out of his, and who, indeed, succeeded so well in their design, as to make him pass for a miser, although no one could be more generous than he.

Mademoiselle Duthé, therefore, made up her mind to devour at least two establishments per month. She opened a credit with all the Parisian tradesmen, bought jewels, rich stuffs, furniture, porcelaine, books, and even paintings of

the most expensive class. The bills did not fail to pour in on my brother like a hail-storm ; but his *homme d'affaires* protested that it was impossible to pay the considerable sums demanded of them, because the coffers were empty.

The Count d'Artois, thus driven to despair, could not support the thought of disobliging his *chère amie*. Accordingly he sent for the controller-general, related his embarrassment, and requested him to extricate him. M. Turgot, very indisposed to sympathize with similar grievances, replied coldly, that the funds in the treasury were not in his power to dispose of, and that he could not make any advance without consulting the king. The Count d'Artois, on this, flew into a passion with M. Turgot, who could think of nothing better than to go and lay the matter before the king. Louis XVI. was very much displeased ; he said that the treasury should not be put in contribution to

satisfy the caprices of a prostitute; that his brother might get out of the scrape as he could; and that he forbade M. Turgot to accede to his demand; he then sent for the Count d'Artois.

The latter went to the king's apartment with a bad grace, foreseeing the lecture he was to expect. In fact, Louis XVI., inspired by a virtuous indignation, reproached him for his prodigal licentiousness, and concluded by declaring that he should receive no additional fund. The Count d'Artois, on whom the royal authority failed to produce much influence, complained that he was left without a proper supply of money; said that he would raise money by loan, and was persuaded that all purses would not be closed against the wants of a prince of the blood. At last the irritation of the king rose to such a height, that he ordered him to his own apartment, and forbade him to quit it without the permission of a new order.

I was luckily made acquainted in good time by Thibault with this misunderstanding, and I hastened to the king's apartment to act again the part of mediator on this occasion. I there found the queen, who was come upon the same errand; for d'Artois, notwithstanding his levity, had become aware that he had gone too far, and had applied to Marie-Antoinette to avert the storm which he himself had conjured up.

My brother, who was still greatly discomposed, interrupted us at the first word, and complained in sweeping terms of the foolish prodigality which menaced to devour all the pecuniary resources of the state. The queen, piqued on her side at what she considered as an indirect insinuation against herself, defended D'Artois with warmth and with the zeal of a person pleading her own cause. The king, irritated by so much opposition; inquired if she was aware of the motives of her brother-in-law's prodigality, and on her reply in the negative, re-

lated D'Artois' expensive attachment. The queen was dumb-founded at first ; then suddenly changing her tone, she gave vent to a philippic against faithless husbands, and amused me greatly by her sudden transit from favour to indignation against my brother—a circumstance that gave me to understand, that infidelity is an offence which women never pardon, even in the husband of another.

The queen retired awhile in order to lecture the culprit, and during her absence I took occasion to mitigate the anger of the king, who consented to withdraw his arrest of the Count d'Artois, and not to push his chastisement any farther ; for there was a question at one time of nothing less than a *lettre de cachet*. But the treaty was yet only half effected ; it was necessary to get his majesty to pay the debts which Mademoiselle Duthé had contracted in the count's name. Our aunts joined their mediation ; M. de Maurepas interceded for him ;

and Louis XVI. beset in this manner, concluded by giving way, and letting my brother have what he required.

A public calamity, which looked like a sad omen for the king's coronation, took place in 1775—I mean the famous popular riots about dear bread, called “*des farines*.” Blood was spilt in various parts of the kingdom. The famished people uttered loud and censorious complaints, which the cabal against Turgot directed against him, under the plea, that he supported the principles of political economy, and free trade in corn. The paternal feelings of the king were greatly distressed by this result. I wish the great body of those about him had been actuated by the same generous sentiments; but the majority, on the contrary, induced him to employ rigorous measures against the rioters, whom famine alone had stimulated to their tumultuous proceedings.

These riots occasioned the necessity of hold-

ing a bed of justice at Versailles. The parliament, which so soon after its return began to show its teeth, came to it with discontent at its heart. The king expressed his dissatisfaction at this conduct to M. d'Aligre, a man with a double face, acting the parasite at Versailles, and the demagogue at the justice hall, cheating alike God and the devil, and swelling the amount of his private fortune by the large sums he extorted from the timidity of the monarch. There never was a more avaricious man; and in the meanwhile, he dissembled the talent and the cunning he possessed under an air of openness, which readily caught his dupes in its toils. He might perhaps have obtained the chancellorship which he canvassed for, had M. de Maupeou concurred with his views by resigning the office.

This was the first bed of justice at which I ever assisted. The king, in making his opening speech, appeared deeply moved; he could not

without regret see the first year of his reign distinguished by popular sedition. I may add, that he burst into tears while addressing me on the subject in the following expressions, which I have great pleasure in recording here :

“ How unfortunate I am to be thus called on, from my first accession to the throne, to employ severity towards my people, when to labour for their happiness is the first wish of my heart.”

CHAPTER III.

Remonstrance of the Court of Aids—The King sends the Count de Provence to answer it—His discourse—Conversation with the Count d'Artois—Coronation of Louis XVI.—Fatal omen—Birth of the Duke d'Angoulême—The queen decides upon the dismissal of the Duke de la Vrillière—Details on the subject—Portrait of M. de Malesherbes—An apt Quotation.

THE Court of Aids, suppressed and re-established in concurrence with the parliament, had made a remonstrance to the king, the nature of which the council deemed worthy of consideration. It was resolved that Louis XVI. should reply to by the mouth of a delegate; and I was indebted to the personal consideration which I enjoyed for being selected to fulfil a mission

honourable to my period of life. It was the Count de Maurepas who engaged the king to employ me. The queen, to whom the king communicated his intention, urged repeatedly that I was too young to be invested with an office of so much trust.

“ You are mistaken,” replied Louis XVI. ; “ monsieur is distinguished by tact and discretion, and I am confident will adequately acquit himself of the mission.”

“ But have you no fear of putting him so forward ? I suspect that he is ambitious, although he has the art to conceal it.”

¶ The king was not deterred by this last observation, although more efficacious than the former ; but the impression of it remained on his mind.

I subsequently learnt from M. de Maurepas the details of this conversation, which convinced me that I had not the good fortune to possess the good opinion of my sister-in-law.

I received my appointment of commissioner to represent his majesty at the Court of Aids on the 31st of May, 1775; and on the day appointed, set out from Versailles accompanied by the Marshal de Clermont-Tonnerre, M. d'Aguesseau, *doyen* to the councillors of state, and M. de Chaumont de la Galaisière, a councillor of state. I was followed by the grand officers of my establishment, while a detachment of life guards, and of the *compagnie rouge*, escorted my carriage. I proceeded at a slow pace through Paris: I bowed to the right and left with all the good-humour I could assume, and it was not without satisfaction I heard the compliments paid to my person and countenance; for I may fairly say they were not parsimoniously dealt out. I was received by the Court of Aids according to the customary usage; and addressed them in a formal speech, which I was told caused displeasure at court—I know not why; for M. de Maurepas had ap-

proved it; but the queen was dissatisfied, and I had therefore to expect incurring the ordeal of her resentment. But I troubled myself little about it, as I was satisfied with the effect which I produced on the assembly. As soon as it broke up, I withdrew full of anxiety, to give an account of my proceedings at Versailles. The king pressed me with questions; and the Count d'Artois asked me if the assembly had not abashed me.

"That is," said I, "as if you asked a warrior if he was frightened at the discharge of fire-arms; for this was one of my fields of battle."

"But I know that the *Robins* are so untractable."

"They possess the firmness becoming men who have a character at stake, and invested with important functions."

"Oh, you like them because they can display their oratory. As for me, I hate philosophers and reasoners."

“It is rather an unjust antipathy, when it may be truly said, that France, at the present day, beholds reason and philosophy seated on the throne.”

The Count d'Artois, not daring to make any objection to this compliment, which was addressed to the king, turned his back on us and withdrew.

We set out for Compiègne on the 5th of June, in order to be near Rheims, where the king's coronation was to be held. It would be supererogatory to record the details of this august ceremony which are to be readily found in the historic records of the period. I shall, therefore, confine myself to saying, that I on that occasion, represented the Duke d'Aquitaine, the first peer of France, and that Louis XVI. having complained that the crown was too small for his head, put it aside, observing, “*I shall never be able to wear it.*”

About this time, the Count d'Eu and the

Prince de Conti went to their last account. The death of the former, whose false position rendered him timid, caused no sensation. It was not so with the death of the Prince de Conti, that confirmed and avowed contemner of the royal authority. The late king equally detested and feared him ; and therefore kept him at as great a distance as possible. His death was a great grief to the Marchioness de Boufflers, who for some years past did the honours of his estate, the Isle d'Adam, where he passed the greater part of his time.

The Countess d'Artois was now arrived near her time of lying-in, and was put to bed on the 6th of August, 1775, of a son, who took the title of the Duke d'Angoulême.

The Count de Maurepas, before this event, was subjected to a mystification which the queen had been long preparing for him.

I refer to the dismissal of his brother-in-law, the Duke de la Vrillière. The latter, de-

spised throughout France, clung with the more tenacity to his post of secretary to the king's household, since, convinced that if he were once more to return to private life, he would fall into a state of total oblivion. The power of M. de Maurepas was requisite to retain him in the possession of a post which every body wished to see him deprived of.

The queen being one day at my house in presence of the mentor, suddenly asked when the Duke de la Vrillière was to give in his resignation. "I am very sorry," she said, with premeditated address, "that he is connected with you by ties of relationship; but we can no longer oppose the general wish of the nation, which loudly demands his dismissal."

The king, delighted with being thus supplied by Marie-Antoinette with the wished opportunity of getting rid of the duke, whom he only tolerated because he would not assume energy enough to disgrace him, said, in his turn, to

the Count de Maurepas, "It is true I feel myself compelled to yield to the solicitations which pour in upon me from all sides. The duke must therefore make up his mind to resign this week. Such is my desire, which I shall thank you to make known to him."

M. de Maurepas was stupified by this unexpected blow; however, perceiving that further resistance to the result was thenceforth impossible, he turned his next thoughts to obtain a delay of the king's resolution. "But, sire," said he, "who will you substitute in his room? I am not aware of any body at present, and that is a point which requires consideration."

"My choice is already made," repeated the king; "and I am persuaded it will meet your approbation as well as that of the public. I mean M. de Malesherbes to be first president of the Court des Aides."

His majesty could not have proposed to his mentor an individual who would suit him less;

for he had reason to fear, that when constantly near his person, the monarch might finally appreciate his merits as they deserved. M. de Malesherbes joined to the possession of the virtues of the good old times, all the amiable polish of a man of the world. His noble character was a combination of philosophy and toleration, of depth and straightforwardness. It was a pleasure to see him, to hear him, to live with him; he was ever equable and the same; kind, affable, conciliating; a scholar without pedantry, a magistrate without pride, and an author without envy. Happy was the man who could acquire him for a friend or minister. But notwithstanding all his good qualities, he was destined to be wrecked at court, while he obtained the suffrages of universal France.

The Duke de la Vrillière learned his dismissal with a degree of grief which shortened his life; but he lived about two or three years afterwards, if my recollection serves. The queen, who

wanted to substitute for him a protégé of the Abbé de Vermont, disapproved the king's choice. I am not aware whether to this cause is to be ascribed the fact of M. de Malesherbes' short stay in office. But, however it may be, the nation had reason to regret his resignation, and his enemies might say with Plautius.

“ Est etiam ubi profecto damnum prodest facere quam lucrum.”

“ There are some occasions when it is more profitable to lose than to gain.”

CHAPTER IV.

The Princess Clotilde demanded solemnly in marriage—
Embarrassment of the Ambassador—Nuptial Ceremony—Epigram—The Tragedy of the *Connetable de Bourbon*—Count Guibert—The Count de Provence goes to Savoy—The Poet Ducis—Chamberry—The Royal Family of Sardinia—Scene in the Royal Box during the Representation of *Romeo and Juliet*—Farewell to the Royal Family—Arrival at Versailles.

THE Princess Clotilde's marriage was about to take place immediately. I was appointed to marry her by proxy for the Prince de Piedmont, and then proceed with the Countess de Provence to Chamberry, where we were to join the royal family of Sardinia.

On the 16th of August the ambassador of

Sardinia, Count de Viry proceeded to Versailles to sign the contract of marriage. I shall not enlarge on the details of the usual ceremonial, but confine myself to the remark, that the count, in addressing his public compliments to me in quality of proxy for the Prince de Piedmont, lost his presence of mind, got confused, and made a speech which partook of his confusion, and at which I could hardly help laughing outright. The same ambassador had subsequently to address the king, on which occasion he succeeded better; but the king, in his reply, proved that he did not go to much expense in matters of oratory. On the 21st, in the evening, after the ceremony of the nuptial benediction, we had a splendid banquet, and a variety of *fêtes*. Jokes were not spared on this occasion on the precocious *em-bonpoint* of Clotilde, and the Marquis de Montesquiou, who piqued himself on a particular faculty for satire

was delivered (such was his expression) of the following quatrain.

Le bon Savoyard qui réclame
Le prix de son double présent,
En échange reçoit madame ;
C'est là le payer grassement.

I was the sole confidant of the author of these verses, and scrupulously kept the secret ; for my wife might have taken the raillery in bad part. As it was, all the rhymesters of the day made a point of claiming them as their own, and they were quickly circulated through Paris.

In the midst of the *fêtes* given on this occasion, we were indulged with a bad publication, about which, nevertheless, the philosophers made a great stir. This was a tragedy by Count de Guilbert, entitled the *Connétable de Bourbon*. This work, which was as badly conceived as executed, was only rendered endurable on the stage by the brilliancy of the decora-

tions and the magnificence of the costumes. It was a mere *spectacle*, and nothing more.

The subject of it, moreover, was ill chosen. It was not pleasant to see a member of our family exhibited in the light of a traitor to his country. I was the first to complain of this; the tragedy in consequence ceased to be represented, and was not produced at the *Comédie Française*. If I stood in need of any justification for this act of censorship, I would say that it was an act of charity to save the work from the hisses with which the pit of that theatre would have overwhelmed it.

The author, the Count de Guilbert, at once a soldier and *bel esprit*, cultivated tactics and poetry alternately; but his *forte* lay in neither. However, he had somehow succeeded in investing himself with a bastard reputation of genius, by inserting articles in his own praise in the newspapers, and by paying liberally for the puffs of his critical admirers. The philosophers

dealt out incense to him with both hands; in fact, they roundly asserted him to be an universal genius. The Count de St. Germain was taken in by him; he made him his assistant colleague in the war department; but he did not stay there any length of time, and the edifice of infatuation he was so long in building up, was seen to give way and vanish in a moment. He died at the commencement of the revolution of a surfeit of suppressed ambition.

The Princess de Piedmont set out from Versailles to meet her husband on the 27th of August, and we commenced our journey from the same place on the 2nd of September; in order to join her at Chamberry. Notwithstanding our precaution of an incognito, we could not escape the honours lavished on us during our journey, and we travelled *bongré malgré* in the midst of *vivats* and complimentary acclamations.

I had with me the poet Ducis, a man of wit

as well as of integrity. I was attached to him, and readily discerned the nobleness of his character, which had subsequently an opportunity of developing itself. He was accused of affecting too much independence, which meant that he was neither an adulator nor a sneak. In the character of a poet he perhaps was deficient in that genius which takes a wide embrace of the best materials for its work ; but he shone in the graceful polish of detail.

Ducis was to bring out his tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* at Chamberry before the royal family of Sardinia. I felt a pleasure in chatting with him on subjects of literature, history, and philosophy. He was at this time attached to the party of Encyclopedists ; but not as a mere underling, and with reservations which maintained the full exertion of his independence. Religious by temperament, he could not approve the atheism which those gentlemen made their boast. It was therefore not by

virtue of that that he at a later period succeeded to the inheritance of Voltaire in the Academy.

We arrived at Chamberry on the 8th of September. Clotilde was there on the 6th. The king, Victor-Amedeus, accompanied by all his family, had proceeded to Echelles to receive the bride. We embraced like members of a private family; and our enjoyment of the nuptial festivity was invested with the same domestic character.

My brother-in-law, the king of Sardinia, was little favoured by personal endowments; but his good qualities amply compensated for the defect, and caused him to be sincerely loved by his people. He reminded me of my impressions of royalty in the "olden times," when its exterior forms partook of the solemn and simple at the same time. It might perhaps have been wished that his piety had been of a more enlightened description. He held the philosophers in perfect horror, and feared God to the extreme of superstition. Under this feeling he

expressed his anxiety to me, lest God should punish the king of France for the tacit protection he had afforded to the enemies of religion. He was fond of the arts, but attached little importance to literature. In other respects, his private life was regulated like that of a monastery. Prayers were read to the whole family morning and evening. Mass was attended once a day, and sometimes twice. Again the church service was attended after noon. In short, the whole affair was equally edifying and melancholy. However, my sister Clotilde easily fell into this course of life, which contributed to reinforce her own natural predilection for devotion.

The queen, an infanta of Spain, would have preferred more pleasures in this world to so many perspective enjoyments in the next. Her chief pleasure here was, in the meanwhile, to laugh at the habits of both men and women, assembled at the Court of Sardinia, which struck her as very grotesque. I have been even assured that she condescended to extend the sphere of her ri-

dicule to the upper bourgeoisie of Turin. She was wedded to the customs of Spain, its gallantry, its nocturnal serenades, and brilliant assemblies. This princess received me very graciously, at first in my character of son-in-law, and subsequently by virtue of the triple alliance which united our families. She was not pretty, but had always persuaded herself that she was, and dressed with as much fastidious care as if her personal attractions had been of the most fascinating description.

The Prince of Sardinia, who was older than me by some years, was my superior also in discretion. Indisposed to warlike exploits, he was more occupied with securing the safety of his soul than the acquisition of glory. He made a scruple of partaking of the smallest diversion which was not authorized by his confessor. I could by no means sympathize with these tastes, and I must be candid enough to confess, that if in the first instance I was anxious to be introduced to his acquaintance, I was not sorry to quit him ;

for my tastes had little in common with so much repulsive austerity. There was a brother of the king, named the Duke de Chablais, an excellent prince in his way, who divided his time into three exact equal parts; one devoted to sleep, the next to the chace, and the third and last to prayer.

The Piedmontese laid aside some of their usual reserve, in order to give us a cordial reception. Our presence imparted some unusual life to Chamberry. The performance of *Romeo and Juliet* took place on the 20th of September. In order to please me, Ducis inserted in the fourth act the portrait of a beloved king, which was as much out of place as meat in Lent. I recollect the wretched verse which had nearly brought down the roof of the theatre with the thunder of applause, so enthusiastic was the popular feeling in favour of the "*Roi Chéri*,"

Qui prête au diadème un charme inexprimable.

The eagerness of the spectators to turn towards the royal box, and the clapping of hands that ensued, greatly affected my august brother-in-law, who did not attempt to conceal his emotion. Tears were in his eyes while he requested the Princess Clotilde to give him a copy of the play, which she held, in order to see if the verse which was so uproariously received constituted part of the printed text, and I had the satisfaction to draw his attention to the fact, that Ducis had added it to the original composition. This compliment was repaid to my author—in thanks. I waited till his majesty retired, hoping that he would receive something more substantial; but seeing nothing forthcoming, I thought it incumbent on me to compensate for the forgetfulness of my brother-in-law, by a present worthy of the poet's amiable desire to please. On his return to Paris, Ducis had the delicacy to give out that the king of Sardinia had made him a present of the jewel

which I had given him ; and I was much obliged to him for the intention, for I should not have liked the name of my brother-in-law to be associated with some lampoon.

There must be a parting, says the proverb, to the pleasantest company : and it was requisite to think of separating from Clotilde and her new relations. Clotilde wept much at parting ; but the Countess de Provence preserved more dignity in the midst of her sorrow. We quitted Chamberry on the 25th of September, and entered Lyons next day at twilight, in great pomp, for our incognito was no longer attended to.

Flesselles, the intendant, distinguished himself on this occasion. We little imagined at that time the cruel end that was reserved for him. He was an individual sincerely attached to the royal family ; a good manager, but deficient in firmness : he was on that account very unfit for the function of Prevôt des Marchands at Paris, to which he was subsequently appointed. The

royal family anxiously awaited our return to hear the news of Clotilde and the court of Piedmont; and as soon as we had satisfied the questions with which we were assailed, we in turn demanded an account of what had passed in our absence. Materials, indeed, were not wanting, for, as it will shortly be seen, there are plenty of charitable worthies in the world, who do not look on calumny as a sin; and we were not long left in ignorance of this axiom.

CHAPTER V.

Disputed claims to the superintendence of the Queen's Establishment—Overture to invest the Countess d'Artois with the Office.—Warning given by the Count de Provence to the Count d'Artois against this trap—Overweening pretensions of the Courtiers at that time—The Maréchale de Mouchy furnishes a handle for her dismissal—The Princess de Lamballe's want of tact—She tires out the Queen—The Princes of the blood dispute the Duke d'Angoulême's title to be called Royal Highness—The too close attachment of the Count d'Artois to the Duke de Chartres—M. de Mury's death, and intrigues to succeed to his office—The Count de St. Germain—Discussion with the Queen on the subject of the *Connétable de Bourbon*—Libellous songs published against her Majesty.

SEPTEMBER 1775 was fertile in great events. The queen, as I have said, who was devotedly attached to the Princess de Lamballe, wished to

have her constantly near her person, and with this view revived the post of superintendent of her establishment. As soon as it was known, all the world was in the field, in order to obtain an office, the advantages of which might be justly calculated as immense. Who should be first on the list was the general aim; cabals crossed and recrossed each other's operations; and there were some persons so ignorant of propriety as to suggest the place to me for the Countess de Provence. I replied that she was too good a family to enter any one's service. In default of my assent, the same attempt was made to put the thought into the head of the Countess d'Artois, who, sanguine and thoughtless, was enthusiastically anxious to obtain it, and spoke of it to her husband, who, being no less giddy and inconsiderate than herself, suffered her to do as she pleased. As soon as I was apprized of this indiscretion, I opened my mind frankly to the Count d'Artois on the subject.

My brother, who was as great a stickler as any body could be for the prerogatives of rank, readily comprehended my reasons as soon as I laid them before him—to the effect, that the post in question was not worthy of the wife of a son of France. He blushed at the easy assent he had given, and assured me that he would prevent the intrigue from going farther. In fact, he that evening had an explanation on the subject with my sister-in-law, who quickly relinquished pretensions which she ought not to have formed. Besides, I know that the queen, however her vanity might have been gratified by having a Princess of Savoy in her service, had other views, and destined the place for Madame de Lamballe. The field therefore remained free to the Duchesses of Chartres and Bourbon, and the Maréchale de Mouchy, lady of honour to the queen, previously known as the Countess of Noailles. Each of these, as Esther says in Racine,

“ Avait sa brigue et de nombreux suffrages. ”

As for the *maréchale*, she moved heaven and earth and all the *Nozilles* in the world, who were all as closely connected as egg and egg-shell. Versailles was turned topsy-turvy, and the king overwhelmed with a storm of applications and memorials. A part was got up for me in this comedy of intrigues, but I declined performing. At last Madame de Mouchy, as a last resort, resolved to speak to the queen herself: but here she made a wrong calculation; for being incapable of controlling her temper, she defended the rights of her office; (which she pretended it would be unfair to diminish in importance,) with so much warmth, that she found herself at last obliged to give in her resignation. The queen was glad to seize the opportunity, which she had long desired, to get rid of the *maréchale*, whose overbearing temper she disliked. She had even honoured her with the title of *Madame l'Etiquette*.

It must not be surmised, however, that the

maréchale retired empty handed, no more than did the other lady of honour, the Princess de Chimay, while submitting to a new superior. She too was bitten by the *chien de la cour*, as it is called, and took advantage of the circumstance to pillage a compensation from the royal family. She accordingly demanded an increase of salary of 40,000 livres, which raised her salary to 100,000 independent of perquisites—a proof that expenses were arranged on a tolerably *liberal* scale in France at that time.

By means of these sacrifices of money, and after getting rid of another claimant, the Countess de la Marche, put forward, I know not for what reason, by the king, the Princess de Lamballe was at last installed in the contested post. But she, instead of making herself agreeable to the queen on all points, was the first to stir up new disagreeables in aiming at augmenting the importance of her functions. Her *exigence* was of the most overweening description; but she

did not promote it with address; for by tiring out my sister-in-law, she prepared the way for her disgrace.

There were, it is true, explanations and reconciliations; but friendship once chilled is soon extinguished. Madame de Lamballe's portrait which used to be placed beneath a glass in the queen's private room, disappeared, and the previous daily and hourly intimacy vanished with it. The Countess Jules de Polignac, meanwhile, was gaining the influence which the Princess lost, and at the commencement of 1775 Madame de Lamballe was no more, with respect to the queen, than a supernumerary source of embarrassment, or what is termed a fifth wheel to the coach.

I foresaw this result; but I confess I was deceived with regard to Madame de Polignac, having predicted that her favour would not be of long duration. The revolution, however, was the only event which could bring it to a termination. She was indebted, I apprehend,

for her influence on the queen, to her cold and unpretending character. The new favourite never, in any case, opposed the queen's wishes, and her gentle tranquillity of manner averted the alternations of storm and sunshine, which trouble more animated friendships.

I may just notice, *en passant*, the singular resistance of the Dukes d'Orleans, and other princes of the blood, to recognize the Duke d'Angoulême's title of royal highness. I warmly espoused the latter's cause in a memorial; but the king cut short the dispute by granting the title in virtue of his competent authority.

My purpose in purchasing the estate of Bruoy was for the purpose of retiring thither, when I pleased to relax from the turmoils of Versailles. It soon became my *lieu de délice*. I made numerous improvements, although my predecessor had spent enormous sums on it. In fact, that spendthrift had been interdicted from dissipating a large part of his fortune in

religious ceremonials, although no notice was taken of the ruinous sums he squandered on the ladies of the opera.

The Count d'Artois continued his close connexion with the Duke de Chartres, whose age ought to have induced him to act the part of mentor towards my brother. But there was no divinity of wisdom concealed under his exterior. He would rather have led him to the Isle of Calypso, than have urged him to fly from it. To drop metaphor, they were in the habit of getting up private parties and *petit soupers* among the Cyprians of *ton*. I trembled for the results of such an infatuation, and could not divest myself of the recollection of the deplorable end of the Prince de Lamballe.

The Count d'Artois was at that time very much enamoured of one of the ladies in waiting to the Duchess de Chartres. He visited her in an *incog*, which by any one else would be considered an exhibition. He was seen perpetually

on the road from Versailles to Paris. In short, he multiplied his giddy proceedings to such a degree, that no one would have imagined all the hopes of the royal family rested at that time on him. I spoke to the king and queen on the subject: but how break the connexion? Our brother, like a high-mettled horse, which obeys neither bit nor bridle, followed the impulse of his passions without thinking of the consequences. It would then have been most difficult to break his connexion with the Duke de Chartres. However, it subsequently terminated of itself without producing the evil consequences we expected.

The death of the Maréchal de Mui, minister of war, occurred about this time; his post was disputed with a pertinacity without example, and even by individuals in disgrace, such as the Dukes de Choiseul and d'Aiguillon; but M. de Maurepas, at the especial recommendation of his wife, reserved it for Mont-

barrey, one of my establishment,—an individual who was always fortunate up to the period of the revolution, although there was nothing in him to justify his good fortune. But the minister, not daring to put him forward in the first instance, reserved him *in petto*, after the manner of the popes; and in the meanwhile resolved to confer the office provisionally on the Count de St. Germain, an old soldier, of some merit but no birth, and long forgotten. This new Cincinnatus was dragged from his obscure retreat, in Franche Comté, where he vegetated on a pension of 10,000 livres, to be placed at the head of the war ministry, and appointed secretary of state. His sudden arrival took every body by surprise. It was expected at first that he would do great wonders : but he introduced a system of narrow and impolitic economy, which only contributed to disorganize the army. It was soon perceived that a worse selection could not have been made ; but unhappily his dismissal was too late to remedy the evil he had occasioned.

The queen, who had declared herself a partisan of the Count Guilbert, persisted in having his tragedy represented in spite of my protest, and the common feeling against it. Abusing her influence over the king, she had this wretched production performed a second time; and the second condemnation was more marked than the first. I could not help saying to her on this occasion; "There is a certain tact as to propriety in France, madame, which is never neglected with impunity."

Marie-Antoinette appeared piqued at these expressions, and requested an explanation.

"I meant to say, madame," I replied, good-humouredly, "that the nation does not approve of such a subject being presented before the royal family."

The queen made no reply; but I saw by her countenance, that my explanation was not entirely satisfactory.

She had soon, however, a more important

care upon her mind. We learnt, and she was one of the first to learn, that there were a series of libellous verses continually published, obviously intended to bring royalty into contempt.

They appeared periodically. The first were directed against the queen, and by no means spared Madame de Lamballe. I was exasperated, and proceeded to the Count de Maurepas, to have a conference with him on the subject, for the purpose of stopping their circulation; but with his ordinary levity, his chief attention was directed to the literary merit of the lampoons, rather than to the libels of which they were the vehicles. However, I succeeded in impressing him with the importance of tracing the poison to its source; and we discussed the steps necessary to be taken in order to effect that purpose.

CHAPTER VI.

Conference with M. D. Maurepas respecting the Criminal Songs—M. de Sartines makes some dilatory disclosures—The Queen is still worse received by the people—She complains to the King—Cabal against the three Ministers, St. Germain, Malesherbes, and Turgot.

I do not know why I should be impressed with the idea of bad faith on the part of M. de Maurepas. Perhaps my impressions were groundless: but for better security, having agreed with the Count to let loose all the terriers of the police, in order to scent the authors of the libel, with the Lieutenant-General Albert at

their head, I determined on consulting M. de Sartines. It seemed to me that he was more likely than another, to lay his hand on the leading-thread of the intriguing woof. I accordingly requested him to pay me a secret visit, and he obeyed me with a zeal for which I was not ungrateful. I had nothing to inform him, for he was already aware of all. He expressed great indignation: but he assured me with a tranquillity of manner which greatly taxed my patience, "Neither you, monseigneur, nor the queen will be able to discover the culprits, and consequently to punish them."

"There are many of them, then."

"Yes; five or six, men and women; and all powerfully supported. It occurs to me, moreover, that the wisest step her majesty could take, would be to abandon useless inquiries; for while they will end in nothing, they will only serve still more to exasperate your common enemies."

" You know the parties then ?"

" I know nothing of the matter," replied M. de Sartines with a melancholy smile ; " pray don't press me any further, monseigneur. Perhaps at some future time I may be able to give you satisfactory details."

This reply, far from satisfying, only stimulated my curiosity. I urged M. de Sartines, but without success. He entrenched himself in a prudent reserve, from whence he would not hazard the slightest departure. However, my zeal was not chilled ; and I continued most active researches. But all my efforts were abortive ; it seemed as if the delinquents had shrowded themselves in an impenetrable veil ; so much so, that the Count de Maurepas, having been equally unsuccessful, we were obliged to give up our proceedings altogether.

The second song, always to the same tune, *Lanlaire lanlaire*, followed close on the publication of the first, as if in mockery of my use-

less labour of research. Bezenval was the hero of this piece, an old campaigner in the wars of Cytherea, lieutenant-colonel of the Swiss guards, whom the condescension of the queen had so puffed up as to induce him to assume upon it in a manner which nothing authorized. This was the gallant of the day with whom Marie-Antoinette was supplied; he was already fifty-four, and *certes* the queen might have made a better selection. These verses, which breathed the most envenomed malice, had an air of truth about them, very well calculated to take in the newsmongers and wondermongers of Paris.

The third couplet was to the well-known tune, "*Vous qui du stupide vulgaire.*" In this the queen was less roughly handled. The authors limited themselves to censuring her contempt for etiquette; but in revenge they lacerated without mercy the male and female individuals in her customary societies, and

especially those whom she admitted to her quadrille parties.

In process of time, the excitement which these anonymous lampoons caused wore off. M. de Maurepas died ; and I had already forgot these turpitudes, to which others not less infamous succeeded, when M. de Sartines, taking me one day aside, addressed me as follows :—

“ I am now at liberty to reveal, without committing myself, what I concealed from you in 1776. The Dukes d’Aiguillon, and St. Florentin, the Rohans, the Noailles, and individuals attached to Maupeou, were no strangers to the songs which so enraged and exasperated the queen. In order to be more certain of secrecy, they confessed all to M. de Maurepas ; the lieutenant of police was also in the secret, and hence the abortive results of your inquiries.”

I was not so surprised at his discovery as M. de Sartines expected. I had my reasons for

suspecting a portion of the truth, and I was satisfied that my suspicions of M. de Maurepas were too well-founded. I kept the secret of M. de Sartines' revelation, which preceded the affair of the diamond necklace; and I had reason to be satisfied with my discretion; for if the queen had been apprized of this old intrigue in which the Cardinal de Rohan had been engaged, she would have pursued her subsequent measures against him with more activity though without more success.

These libels greatly detracted from the respect and love which the queen was entitled to expect from the nation. She was but too quick in perceiving the coldness with which she was received by the Parisians. All mouths were dumb when she appeared; and not an applause was to be heard. One evening that she returned from the opera, where her presence had failed to excite the least enthusiasm, the king, who was not aware of it, asked how she had been

received. The queen was silent, and made a gesture of dissatisfaction which surprised his majesty.

“ Perhaps, madame, the reason was, that you did not wear plumes enough.”

The king here made a jocular allusion to my sister-in-law’s ultra taste for that description of head-dress. Marie-Antoinette was not in a mood to take the joke in good part, and somewhat impatiently replied, “ I am not certain that you would have been better received if you had gone in company with MM. de St. Germain and Turgot.”

The queen was at the head of the cabal opposed to the ministerial trio composed of these gentlemen and Malesherbes. The first displeased every body at court; the second ruined it by his economical reforms; and the upright conduct of the last was a standing reproach to all the courtly tribe. There was not a single courtier, who from morning till night,

did not run down M. Turgot. The firm grasp with which he held the strings of the royal purse, was imputed to him as a crime. Every body co-operated to effect his downfall; the queen, the Count d'Artois, and the Princess de Lamballe. It was impossible that he could make head against such powerful adversaries.

CHAPTER VII.

Letter from the queen's brother, Joseph II.—He comes to Versailles—Details of his residence at the court—Sarcasm of the Count de Provence—Conduct of the Emperor to the royal family—The Count de Provence's Journey into the south—Necker, Controller of Finances—His portrait—His wife and daughter—M. de Clugny—The Archbishop of Toulouse.

MARIE-ANTOINETTE was this year gratified with learning that her brother, the Emperor Joseph II., wishing to see France, would pay her a visit during the course of his journey of observation. The queen, who recollected the ill effect produced by the Arch-duke Maximilian during a similar visit, was anxious that the em-

peror's *debut* should be more successful; she knew the princes of the blood were ill-disposed to make such concessions to his claims as he might expect, and, therefore, wrote to him to ascertain in what manner he wished to be received. The emperor replied, that although, as emperor of Germany, no one had any right to dispute his precedence any where, yet in travelling under the name of Count de Falkenstein, he should contest that precedence with nobody; that he should accept whatever honour was paid him, and exact none, &c. &c. The queen was delighted with this letter; and I entertained a favourable idea of him from its perusal. His journey would coincide with one which the Count d'Artois and I were about to undertake—he to proceed to Bourdeaux and the west, and I to the south—a progress which the king encouraged as preparatory to the part which France was going to take in the war between England and the United States. The emperor

arrived at Paris under the strictest incognito. The queen was affected to tears at seeing her brother after so long an absence; so much so, that he laughingly asked her if she were grieved at seeing him. After this rather unsentimental *débüt*, he replied with perfect good nature, to her numerous questions respecting the members of her family and numerous friends; and then they proceeded together to see the king.

Louis XVI. who did not expect the emperor so early, was in his workshop, employed in his favourite trade of blacksmith. As soon as he had intimation of the august visit, he hurried down stairs to erase from his hands and face the marks of his trade, and then went to pay his respects to the brother and sister. The interview took place in the ante-chamber, which contributed to divest it of etiquette, and the party then entered his majesty's private apartment, where the conversation soon took an animated turn.

The queen wanted to give the Count d Artois

and me notice that her brother was with the king, in order that we might wait on him first. But the emperor, who had previously made up his mind to violate all the rules of etiquette, declared that he intended to anticipate us; and then, without waiting for an answer, departed. His imperial majesty first visited the Countesses d'Artois and Provence, and our aunts, and not stopping there, proceeded to pay his respects to the ministers—a breach of etiquette which made considerable stir.

This *debüt* put every body at ease, and at once got rid of all the obstacles which the queen had dreaded to anticipate. In short, he conducted himself in a manner the very reverse of the Archduke Maximilian, and completely made amends for his brother's deficiencies. He said to Count Buffon with politeness and humour united, "I am come, sir, to claim the copy of those works which my brother in the hurry of his departure, had the carelessness to forget." It was impos-

sible to obtain pardon for a rudeness with more address.

The emperor enchanted the Parisians by the ease of his manners, and his *laissez-aller*, in which, however, he knew where to stop. He succeeded equally well with the courtiers and the ministers, to whom his polite attentions became matter of boast. But he was less successful with us ; for as soon as he became intimate, his ease of manner changed into an over familiarity and an under-tone of banter, which, from a German lip, grated on a French ear.

The king naturally timid, felt awkward in his brother-in-law's company. He was cowed by his superior age, and the unceremonious tone which he affected. Generally he remained silent, and contented himself with smiling even at things at which he was least pleased. As for me, though preserving my customary reserve, I dropped now and then some repartees to the emperor, which let him see that he would

have found who he was talking to, if my sense of hospitality had not prompted me to yield him the honours of the conversation.

The queen, whose tact was remarkable, endeavoured to soften down her brother's piquant remarks. She converted his most severe observations into a joke, accused him of not knowing French, and imputed the improprieties which occasionally escaped him, to his ignorance of the language. In short, she exhibited herself as an excellent sister, and we could not but feel obliged to her.

But the emperor, seeing nothing of this, or not willing to see it, continued his sarcasms without much troubling himself whom they hit. The queen herself did not escape. He quizzed her on the choice of her intimate society, and I could perceive, by the forced smile on her lips, that the subject was not to her taste. His imperial majesty having appealed to me on this point, I replied with the most dignified air I

could assume, "I am too well aware, M. le Comte, what a prince owes to sovereigns, to interfere as an arbiter in their disputes."

The emperor made a grimace, being doubtless one of that class who think they may be permitted to play on others as much as they please, and appear astonished when they are turned upon. He seemed to pay close attention to the princess Elizabeth; and we began to think that he intended to place her on the imperial throne; but it was only the kindness of a good relation, and came to nothing.

Notwithstanding her attention to him, the queen had no right to be perfectly satisfied with her brother. He even permitted himself to make an ungallant remark on her to Clarival the actor, who, according to custom, one evening lighted him out from his attendance at the Italian opera.

"You have," said he, "a young and giddy queen: but she ought to please the French,

since they cannot but feel flattered by her forgetting the Austrian blood which flows in her veins."

If I had been present, I confess I should have been prompted to prove to his imperial majesty that the French are not to be insulted with impunity.

The immoderate mania for gambling at court, and horse-racing, were particular subjects of the emperor's sarcasms. He called the latter, Count d'Artois' course of studies; but if he took advantage of our politeness, he did not acquire our friendship. Magnificent *fêtes* were given to him, which he took occasion to criticize by being cynical on the subject of the expenses they must have occasioned. Nothing, in short, found favour in his eyes; and one would have inferred from his perpetual performance of the part of censor, that he had come to Versailles with the sole intention of finding fault with every thing. On his first arrival, he refused the

apartments offered him at the palace, and persisted in taking up his quarters at an inn. Thence he came to *pay his court* to the king and queen, as he affectingly expressed himself.

He saw little of M. de Maurepas, but to make amends, he amused himself greatly at the expense of what he termed his old experience in trifles. This *bon-mot* rather pleased me; and, indeed, M. de Maurepas was one of those friends of mine, against whom I could excuse a joke, provided it was apposite. He alleged that every body was king in France except the king; that Marie-Antoinette took pains to diffuse the belief that there was no queen, and that amidst so many elements of disorder, he wondered how the peace of the country was preserved.

Finally, having exhausted all the stores of his venom, and ridiculed, to the utmost of his power, those who received him with open arms, he departed on the 31st of May. When taking leave of the queen, he promised to pay her a second visit;

but none of the family were very pressing in reminding him to be as good as his word.

My progress to the south, which was delayed till his departure, began on the 10th of June. I was every where well received, and on the 17th of July I returned to Versailles, bringing with me the affections of all the provinces I had traversed, as well as a large supply of memoranda and observations of all kinds, intending to benefit the localities I had visited by submitting them to his majesty. I might moreover triumphantly give the lie to the adage

Rarement à courir le monde,
On devient homme de bien,

for I hoped to demonstrate that I had derived advantage from my travels, physically as well as morally, since my health had greatly improved in consequence.

During my absence, the king had called to

the finance department a man from whom so much benefit was expected; but who did so much injury to the nation. Necker is the individual I mean.

I confess that I was deluded by appearances at the outset of his career; but I really thought him capable of great things, and only took a just estimate of him, when he entered a second time on the management of financial affairs. His *débüt* deceived the calculations of the most sagacious. They praised him to the skies, and unhappily the error was long in being discovered. There were two individuals in Necker; the financier and the braggard. When separated, one performed wonders; but when united, they committed nothing but blunders.

As a financier, this minister was endowed with wisdom, enlightened views, consummate familiarity with accounts and political economy; an anxiety to bring the disbursements within the receipts, great resources within himself to

effect that purpose, a fastidious probity, and sufficient energy to make head against the rapacity of courtiers, and the predominance of persons of rank. His cautious ability secured him the confidence of the stock-brokers. It was well understood that he would not seek, by ruinous loans, to increase a constantly augmenting deficit, and that he would employ none but measures calculated to press as lightly as possible on the people and the nation.

But the plebeian was imbued with the mania of acting the part of a great lord—in a word, the bashaw in the most offensive sense, was the ill quality which was associated with so many superior attributes, and deteriorated the rest to that degree, as to render them all but useless. He who never saw M. Necker in the nearest point of view, can have no adequate idea of his self-sufficiency and pride. He had so high an idea of his importance, that the most exaggerated eulogiums appeared to fall short of his

merit. In fact, in 1789, he did not hesitate to propose himself as regent of the kingdom, represented as it then was by the Constituent Assembly, the average talent and discrimination of which cannot be denied.

M. Necker paraded his pretensions in public as well as in private; they were always at his fingers ends, and appeared to form a part of the air he breathed. The result was, that in lieu of pleasing, he made himself insupportable; in wishing to raise himself above every body, he wounded every body's self-opinion; and far from giving him credit for his deserts, nothing was seen but the ridiculous side of his character. He passed his whole life in dreaming of the distinctions which were due to his services. Not valuing money, all his ambition was concentrated in the hope of acquiring the blue ribbon or a peerage; for though he was a Protestant, and had no pretension to family, he took it into his head that no reward was too much

for him to expect from the gratitude of his sovereign. His wife and daughter supported him in this illusion : he was all but their God, and they would readily have raised temples and altars to his honour. The philosophers might have constituted the flock of the new church, while its priests might have been readily found in some noblemen and men of letters, who suffered themselves to be dazzled by the borrowed light of this eccentric star.

As to the rest, indeed, every member of this philosopher's family felt a thirst for illustrious associations. The daughter, Madame de Staël, could not breath in a plebeian atmosphere ; and fearing, with her democratic principles, to be charged with being aristocratic, she invented the term "historic names," as a substitute for the word nobility,—as an opiate to her conscience. I need not draw her portrait. It is in every body's hands ; I should be, moreover, afraid of depicting it in a manner but little impartial ;

for while I am disposed to do full justice to her genius, I cannot readily forget the discourtesy of her conduct towards us. Her writings had removed her somewhat out of our track ; but before 1790, she had treated the royal family as enemies, especially the queen and myself.

In 1814, the restored monarchy was destined to see rallying round it, not only the faithful servants who had always preserved their attachment, but several converted royalists. Madame de Staël was among the latter number. I trust her conversion was sincere. It was, it is true, paid for with a million down. *I did not scruple to treat Corinne as the daughter of an accountant.*

On my return from my progress, I was very well disposed in Necker's favour. As for the queen, she would rather have had the Archbishop of Toulouse as finance minister, whom the Abbé Dermont was incessantly recommending to her, and who began to be thought a useful man, as a prelude to being thought indispensable. But

M. de Maurepas was not in his favour. He feared the ambition of an archbishop, who might become a cardinal, and dispute his place. He therefore persuaded the king that the archbishop's talents were too necessary in Languedoc to warrant his removal. Louis XVI., who at the bottom, had no preference, then accepted Necker, to the great scandal of the clergy, on witnessing a Protestant minister. They, however soon relented, and considering the controller general was not a Jansenist, the Archbishop of Paris solemnly invited him to dinner.

CHAPTER VIII.

Cromot Dubourg—His whims—His son Fongy—MM. de St. Germain and Maurepas—The Countess's favourite cat—It is decided to dismiss M. de St. Germain—Conversation of the King and his Mentor, on the subject of M. de Montbarrey—The latter nominated war minister—The Queen *enceinte*—Ruinous state of the Finances—Fête at Trianon—The king's dissatisfaction—Family quarrels—The Count de Provence mixed up with them—How he extricates himself—Bagatelle—Madame de Canillac—The Rohans, the Count de Maurepas, the Queen, and the Abbé Georgel—Intrigues and disclosures respecting the Grand Almonership—M. de Montesquiou's genealogy—*Item* of M. de Pezay—Doyen—Duel of the Count d'Artois and the Prince de Condé.

CROMOT DUBOURG, my house-steward, united unusual talent to strange caprices, which rendered him very unamiable at home. He was severe to his children who never appeared in

his presence without trembling. He never unbent, except in the presence of his mistress Coraline, of the Italian theatre. His eldest son followed the military profession. I think I see him now, diminutive, waspish, acute and bustling, and in a state of perpetual motion. The youngest, who was of the same pigmy proportions, was more composed; he was attached to the arts, and to painting, and to every thing that was associated with tranquil enjoyment. Dubourg was entitled to choose his successor; and I thought he would have chosen the latter; but no; one fine morning he came to me and solicited the reversion of his place for De Lessart, the *maître de requêtes*, who was for a short time minister to Louis XVI. I exclaimed against this; but the father was inexorable, and I was obliged to comply. Some years after, M. de Lessart voluntarily retired, and I then took Fongy Dubourg in his place, which he retained till the revolution.

I perceived M. St. Germain plunging deeper and deeper in the mire of difficulty every day. All his reforms had failed. He had besides, nothing agreeable in himself to make amends. He was morose, nervous, and religious almost to bigotry. He was a bore to every body. In short, the fruit was dead ripe, and Montbarrey had nothing to do but to gather it.

M. de Maurepas had cast his eyes on the latter, knowing he had nothing to dread from his talent, and that he should find in him all the docility of a slave. In fact, he could not have selected a person more convenient for performing the part of a man-of-straw minister, without being identified with the authority of his office. Madame de Maurepas, moreover, felt a warm interest in my servant, and never ceased dinning his praises in the ears of her complaisant husband: we were told, however, that one evening when the premier appeared to be

dropping off to sleep, while his lady was talking to him, she resorted to the expedient of throwing her cat at his head, in order to rouse his attention.

Who that was familiar with Versailles from 1774 to 1781, has not heard talk of that famous cat, who, never out of place, received in common with his mistress, the homage of the court. Grimalkin sustained an elevated rank among the population of cats. She had her purveyors, her *menins*, and her parasites. Place was made for her when she proceeded into the state apartments, and more than one sentinel would have presented arms to her, in the hope of promotion, had he not been fearful of alarming her favourite cat. I still think I see our most stately dowagers, our most lordly nobles, even our cardinals, and my worthy aunt Adelaide, admiring the grace, the liveliness, or the nonchalance of this spiteful personage, whose malicious claw made no distinction of rank, if any

one ventured to approach her with greater familiarity than she approved. There were, however, some rebels in the palace, who, like Mordecai, refused to bow the knee to the idol; these were the pages, who, more disposed to fun than ambition, played a thousand tricks deserving hanging on poor Grimalkin; sometimes pinching her tail unobservedly; sometimes abstracting a whisker, under pretence of caressing her; and the cat, who was perfectly awake to who were her enemies, raised her back as they approached, or indicated, by repeated mewings, the culprits who had dared to lay profane hands on her person. Nothing was wanted but to invent the new crime of cat-treason.

Madame de Maurepas must therefore have been tolerably infatuated in favour of Montbarrey, to treat her favourite with so little consideration; and the mentor, terrified at a demonstration which amounted to a declaration of war,

laid siege in form to St. Germain, in order to force him to beat a retreat; he then applied himself to the task of persuading the king that no one but Montbarrey was fit to occupy his place.

"But," said the king, "are you sure that the prince is competent to functions of so much importance?"

"I can at least assure your majesty," replied M. de Maurepas, laughing, "that he will at all events do as well as his predecessor."

"I should have wished him to do better," replied the king, without suffering himself to be taken off his guard by the premier's joke.

"Be assured, sire, the talents of M. de Montbarrey only want an opportunity of display. He will have, moreover, the benefit of my advice, and we shall take care to surround him with persons of merit. Besides, your majesty has doubtless not forgotten that you have already given him the reversion of this post."

It was in this manner that the premier

dragged from the king his consent to M. de Montbarrey's appointment. The latter, to whom he reported the conversation, related it to me next day. But he is less obedient to truth in his "Memoirs;" in which he wishes to have it believed that his merit alone decided the king's choice; whereas he owed every thing to M. de Maurepas, or rather to the opportune discharge of the countess's cat at his head.

This appointment did not please the queen; her coterie would have preferred some one more under her control, whereas M. de Montbarrey seemed to be the premier's choice or mine. I admonished the new minister to do what he could to overcome her dissatisfaction; but he was so puffed up with his own importance, that far from resolving to conciliate her, he complained of her injustice, and took upon himself to oppose whatever she required. This was a miscalculation of his real interests. The mentor's support could not counterbalance that of the

queen for ever ; I tried to open his eyes, but he turned a deaf ear to my warning, and three years after he was ousted from his office.

This year was indeed destined to augment the influence of the queen ; for she was about to become *Queen of France in reality*, as she told Madame Campan, who regarded it as no harm to report the expression to me. Before the public disclosure of it, we perceived her every day acquiring new influence over the king's mind. Accordingly, notwithstanding the economy which Louis XVI. always aimed at introducing into the public expenses, they went on continually augmenting. This was the case especially after the resignation of M. Turgot ; for the two finance ministers, who successively succeeded him, had made it a part of duty to satisfy all the capricious wants of certain members of the royal family. The queen, who seemed to think the public purse inexhaustible, proceeded full sail in her expenses, loading her

creatures with presents, whose disinterestedness has been fallaciously cried up. In the same manner, the Countess d'Artois, and sometimes myself, helped ourselves to the public funds, whenever our own were aground. The reign of Louis XV. was nothing to it. M. de Maurepas, who, at his age, probably thought that there would be enough to last his time, suffered us to have it entirely our own way. The king alone made an effort to struggle against the current, and tried every now and then to strike some vigorous blow, demonstrative of his dissatisfaction; but it only served to render his powerlessness the more conspicuous. I will relate a proof of this here.

The queen had been so gratified by the *fêtes* given at Petit Trianon in honour of the Count de Falkenstein, that she felt a desire to repeat them; and in order to have an adroit excuse for the expense, it was agreed between her and her friends to dedicate one to the king on the

day of his patron saint, during the autumn of 1777. Immediately all the directors of these sorts of amusement were put in requisition, and things were proceeding *à merveille*, when Necker, who was just installed, perceiving the magical dexterity with which the funds were caused to disappear from the public chest, grew alarmed, and sent one of his admirers, M. Thiars, to speak to the king on the subject.

Louis XVI. was the more vexed at the information, as he had this year, from motives of economy, suppressed the journey to Fontainebleau, and a great number of other periodical amusements, which he thought cost too much. He therefore resolved, without previously apprizing her, to read his august spouse a lesson, and sent a refusal to her invitation. The queen, astonished, inquired his reason.

"Because," replied the king, "I will not sanction by my presence expenses which the state of the finances does not warrant."

Marie-Antoinette exclaimed that the *fête* would cost a mere trifle.

"Have you seen the estimate, madame?"

"No, sire."

"Then have it submitted to you, and you will find it exceeds 80,000 livres. I should think myself criminal to sanction such extravagant follies, and therefore I am resolved not to go."

The queen retired greatly mortified; and consulting with her intimates, came to the determination to postpone the *fête* to another occasion. The king held out firm at first, but having heard it reported one morning that I was accused of having instigated his majesty's refusal, and resolved not to bear the blame, I seized the occasion of being with the king and queen, to say to the former, "Sire, it is reported that I advised you not to attend the queen's *fête*, and that I exaggerated its expenses. I trust that you, having the power to do so, will exonerate me from blame!"

The queen, who was rather embarrassed by this sudden indirect attack on her, hastened to assure me that she was persuaded of the falsehood of the accusation.

"I would readily believe you, madame," replied I, "if I did not know that there were individuals who seek to injure me in your good opinion. The only favour I intreat of your majesty is not to condemn me unheard."

The king then interposed, to say that I was innocent, and was not even in communication with the person who had given him the information; and I took advantage of the overture, to intreat him, on my own account, as he refused to surrender the objector's name, to come to the *fête*, in order that the expenses already incurred might not be thrown away. The queen, on her side, intreated him with so much grace, that it was impossible to refuse her; and the king at last giving way, the *fête* took place on the 3rd of September. Never was any thing more

beautiful, nor better conducted. The queen presided like another Armida at her enchanted palace; and the magnificence of the night completed the general gratification.

The Count d'Artois, whom no expense deterred from any whim he took into his head, resolved to make a *Petit Trianon* of a small villa called Bagatelle he possessed in the Bois de Boulogne. He laid a wager with the queen that he would build an elegant pavilion in a month, and the bet was fixed at the expense of the building,—100,000 livres. Gallant, his architect, agreed to undertake to build it in the specified time; and the count having gained the wager, received the money. To this he added 500,000 livres more, and soon had the pleasure of seeing all the credulous wonder-mongers of Paris crowding to see his quickly-constructed miniature palace. It afterwards became his favourite residence. His sleeping room was modelled like a tent, and adorned with

warlike ornaments. It was there that this modern Achilles sought repose, not from the toils of war, but from those of luxury and pleasure.

His passion for Madame de Canillac exhibited itself about this time. He quitted for her the lady in waiting to the Duchess de Chartres, to whom I have before referred. She had been placed, through the credit of the Princess Guéméné, about the person of my sister Elizabeth; and it was through seeing her in that situation that he took it into his head to be attracted by her personal charms. But I must defer the details of this new passion, in order to record the death of the grand almoner, the Cardinal de la Roche-Aymond.

The grasping family of Rohan considered this office, having been successively filled by two prelates of their line, to belong to them as a matter of right; and Madame de Marsan, whose only thought was family grandeur, had by intrigue extorted a written promise of the

post from Louis XV. to Prince Louis de Rohan. But the Rohans knew that the queen disliked Prince Louis; while the premier, the secret adversary of the queen, supported him, without her knowledge. She would have soon torn off the mentor's mask, if she had entertained the least suspicion of his double dealing. There were two prelates in the family who might pretend to the post of grand almoner, the Prince Louis and Ferdinand his brother. The latter, whose conduct was not a whit better regulated than the former, was nevertheless selected by the king, who hoped thereby to compensate the queen for the non-appointment of Prince Louis, and yet to keep his engagements with the Rohan family. The mentor informed Prince Louis, and the latter induced his sister, the Princess de Guéméné, to write to the queen in his behalf. The Rohans were delighted with the queen's letter in reply, which was to this effect :

"Do not be uneasy, madam ; the grand almonry shall not be taken from your family."

The Abbé Georgel was consequently sent to M. de Maurepas to convey to him the good news. The mentor asked for the consolatory letter, read it with a sneering smile, and then said to Georgel, " This is a second edition of the letter of La Châtre."

The surprised Abbé demanded an explanation:

" Nothing so easy," returned the minister.

" The queen has told the truth, in saying that the office shall be reserved for the Rohan family: but it is Prince Ferdinand, and not Louis, who will have the appointment."

The Abbé Georgel returned with this intelligence to his employers, and they having apprized Madame de Marsan, she, as soon as she was informed that the breath was out of the cardinal's body, hurried the next morning at an early hour to the king, at Versailles, and there, after a long struggle, succeeded in inducing the

king to change his first resolution in favour of Prince Ferdinand, and to confer the post of grand almoner on Prince Louis de Rohan.

The next difficulty was to break the matter to the queen, and I was invested with this painful task.

The queen had great difficulty in suppressing her resentment; and I suffered her dissatisfaction to find vent in words. Having, moreover, little esteem for the grand almoner, I did not attempt to find excuses for him, when the queen, with much bitterness, ran over the catalogue of the offences he had offered her. In fact the wound she sustained from one of these was still recent. On the day of the *fête*, she had given to her brother at Petit Trianon, Prince Louis, who was not invited, had the audacity to appear in the gardens, in red stockings and chenille; impertinent remarks, cutting equivoques, and malicious epigrams followed, which had mortally hurt the queen, and she had not yet forgiven them.

However, the result was, that she authorized me to inform his majesty that he was at liberty to appoint Prince Louis, provided he was suffered to have no communication with her; and with this the king was satisfied.

This contempt was followed by a still more public mark of her dislike, on her receiving his visit of etiquette as grand almoner, on the following 9th of November. Her freezing coldness drew tears from his eyes. He departed with rage at his heart, and vowing to be revenged. He kept his word; for if the revenge he took was not voluntary, it was not the less cruelly pernicious, as will be seen in the result.

During these intrigues, I took in hand an affair of the highest importance—not less than that of restoring a rival family to its approximation to our throne, from which my ancestors had compelled it to descend. I refer to the support I gave my *premier Ecuyer*, M. de Montesquiou, in obtaining letters patent, admit-

ting his descent from the Counts Aimery in 1050, and authorizing him to join the name of Fezensac to that of Montesquiou. The public cut jokes on this recognition, and M. de Maurepas, in presenting my *premier ecuyer* the act which confirmed his pretensions said, "Here-with, sir, you have the act which declares you a heir of Clovis, but my lieges only consent to the recognition, on condition that you permit them to occupy the throne."

Some time after, M. de Montesquiou, who wrote verses, and produced agreeable comedies, having been received into the number of the forty immortals, at the *Académie Française*, was saluted with the following distich, which was attributed to twenty authors, and every body but the right.

Montesquiou-Fezensac est de l'Académie :
Quel ouvrage a-t-il fait ?—Sa généalogie.

The Marquis de Pezay, who had married a lady of quality, died this year in disgrace. His

vanity gave rise to one of those hyperbolical anecdotes, which, however, often depict the man. Though the grandson of a grocer, he had got a genealogy fabricated for him, which alleged his descent from an ancient family in Italy : it was said that he always carried his titles of nobility in his portfolio when he travelled ; and when he made a stop at any place, they were suspended from the wall in order to gratify the amateurs.

Doyen, whom I had appointed my *premier peintre*, a man of wit and warm imagination, and decidedly the most skilful artist of his time, had painted M. de Pezay's portrait ; but he did not love him the better on that account, but ridiculed him to any body who would listen, and called him minister of war for Parnassus. Doyen did not like the philosophers, who, he alleged, injured the art of church painting ; and yet it was these brave monks, he used to say, who supplied us with the means of keeping

mistresses. Put down the churches, and people will think five louis too much to pay for a picture.

On the 22nd of January we had the ceremony of a public reception of Sidi Tahor Fennie, ambassador from the emperor of Morocco, the splendour of which rivalled the magnificence of the court of Louis XIV.

[The Editor has taken upon him to omit the author's protracted details of the well-known duel between the Count d'Artois (Charles X.) and the Prince de Condé.]

The affair arose out of an insult offered to the Duchess de Bourbon, at a masqued ball at the Opera, by the Count d'Artois. The latter was prompted to it by his new paramour. Madame de Canillac, who accompanied him, owed the duchess an old grudge for dismissing her, in consequence of her having deprived her of the affections of her husband. The count pretended to take the duchess for a lady of easy virtue,

and addressed her in correspondent language. The duchess, indignant at the affront, commanded him to desist ; but her commands only subjected her to new impertinences, till at length she could bear it no longer, and tearing off the mask of the aggressor, recognized the Count d'Artois. The latter now becoming angry in turn, at this violation of the laws of masquerades, returned the compliment, seized the duchess's mask, tore it to pieces, and then departed with a careless turn on the heel. The affair might have been forgotten, but the next day the count boasted of it to every body ; all Versailles and Paris were in an uproar, and the result was the challenge of the Prince de Condé. Long negociations, at the king's desire, were resorted to, in which M. de Maurepas and the Count de Provence were employed to prevent this violation of Louis the XVth's laws against duelling. However, the duel took place notwithstanding, and terminated without injury to

either party. The only piquant anecdote which the author adds to this short sketch of facts sufficiently recorded in the history and memoirs of the time, is the following passage, which occurred during the conversation between the king and the Prince de Condé on the subject.

“ I shall always be opposed to your object,” (the duel,) said the king, “ both as king and brother. I swore at my coronation to punish duellists, and I cannot, without breaking my oath, authorize yours.”

“ Sire,” replied the Prince de Condé, “ I am come to demand justice of your majesty, and if you refuse it, I shall be compelled to do justice to myself.”

So saying, he bowed, and without waiting to be dismissed by the king, according to etiquette, quitted the room. I made a sign to the premier to follow the prince, and he remained sometime in conversation with him.

Meanwhile, Louis XVI. walked backwards

and forwards for some time in silence, as if meditating some great *coup d'état* ; so at least I thought. At last, drawing a little key from his pocket, he tried to open a casket, saying to me ; “ Would you believe it ? I have been these eight hours labouring at this cursed key and could do nothing with it. But you perceive,” added he, showing it to me, “ that I have not lost all my pains.”

In fact, the workmanship was a *chef d'œuvre* of industry and patience. The king resumed it after I had surveyed it : and then turning it over on every side, added, “ Ah ! I see now, where the defect lies ! two strokes of the file will set it to rights.”

So saying, the king opened the door of the staircase leading to his blacksmith's shop, and disappeared.

CHAPTER IX.

Voltaire at Paris—The Count de Provence obtains leave for him to return there—He goes to see him incognito—Costume of the Philosopher of Fernay—Piquant Conversation—Voltaire own brother of the Duke de Richelieu—His singular death—War with America—Franklin—Foresight of the Count de Provence—His surprise to see the wives of three Ministers supping with the Queen—Death of Rousseau—The Queen *enceinte*—Gambling and cheating at Marley—The Prince de St. Maurice and the man in the rose-coloured coat.

A LITTLE before this event Voltaire arrived suddenly at Paris—towards the middle of February—after an absence of twenty years. His apparition put all the capital in motion; every body was anxious to see and approach him.

The crowd never quitted the house of the Marquis de Valette's where he lodged, and which was situated on the Quai des Théatins, at the corner of the Rue de Beaune. As Louis XVth's lettre de cachet still existed, a negociation was set on foot with me, by his precursor M. d'Argental, to get it removed. I think I see the latter now with his bird's-nest wig, his wild look, and his countenance of solemnity, whenever the discussion turned on trifles. After numerous efforts, we at last obtained, not the revocation but the suspension of the lettre de cachet during good behaviour. Voltaire was so anxious to revisit Paris, that he arrived suddenly, in order to give the clergy no time to intrigue against his return ; and it is well he did, for some of the more bigoted prelates were near getting him sent back again ; and I was obliged to express my resentment on the subject to M. de Maurepas who would readily have abandoned him.

Shall I confess that I had an extreme desire

to see Voltaire, though I feared to display it? As the king would not allow him to come to Versailles, I resolved to visit him *incognito*, and, not to let himself know the secret of my rank. M. de Villette alone was in my confidence. The interview took place in the following manner :

The Patriarch of Ferney was just recovering from an illness ; and there was no impropriety therefore in his being denied. One evening, perhaps unknown to himself, M. de Villette's porter closed the door on the literary adorers of the idol ; and I was furtively introduced into the hotel, accompanied by Montesquieu and Modène. I was announced as the Baron de Rouvière, a fictitious title, that was destined to become extinct an hour after its assumption. We found the divinity of the day wrapped in a robe de chambre, of blue damask, with flowers worked in gold and silver. It might have been taken for a pontifical robe. His head was covered with a cotton nightcap, over which was

another of black velvet, embroidered with gold, and adorned with fur: this was a present from the *Catau* of the north, as he termed the empress of Russia.

His eyes were lighted up with the fire of genius, intermixed with an expression of sagacity and sarcasm. When he opened his mouth he displayed jaws totally despoiled of teeth; a sardonic smile often wrinkled his thin and pallid lips. His aquiline nose approached his pointed and projecting chin, and his hollow cheeks, with high raised cheek-bones, were covered with a withered and wrinkled skin, which gave to his entire appearance something of a cadaverous cast.

He rose on our approach, and listened to my complimentary salutation with the air of a man accustomed to receive compliments. Then, without asking a single question as to my name or rank, which gave me some cause for reflection, he introduced a conversation replete with gaiety

and point. I asked him ironically, when he should go to court.

"It is a labyrinth," he replied, "the thread of which I have lost. Besides, what should I do there, where all defects are kept in the background—a *vieux garçon* like me would cut but a sorry figure."

"But you could pay your respects to the king."

"The incense offered to the gods is not the worse received for coming from a distance."

"You find Paris greatly changed during your absence."

"Yes; its inhabitants begin to think, and I hope it will not be long before they act."

"But for what object?"

"For the common good. Does not the king himself set them the example?"

"Not to mention the clergy," I added, laughing.

Voltaire made a grimace, and I proceeded.

“ The clergy is the torch which guides us.”

“ Or rather that which seeks to extinguish all other lights.”

“ You are severe on them.”

“ Superstition is the pest of empires, and these gentlemen propagate it every where.”

“ However, the parliaments are now luckily at hand to crush the evil in the bud.”

Another grimace ; and after a moment of silence, Voltaire said with animation, “ Would to God, that the lamb, in being snatched from the jaws of the wolf, may not fall into the clutches of the wild dog, who, instead of protecting it, will lacerate it without mercy. But France can still boast noble and generous spirits who will pronounce in favour of the oppressed. To them I owe my love ; and I am confident they would never have restored power to men of the long robe, if bent on vengeance.”

If I had been known to Voltaire, I should

have fancied that this compliment was intended for me; but assuming the air of not noticing it, I changed the conversation, and asked him what was the best way to profit by the study of history.

“ I believe,” rejoined he, “ it will be requisite, in that instance as in others, to admit what is possible, and reject what is impossible. One ought to distrust historians as if they were romance writers.”

“ We can therefore get but an imperfect view of ancient history.”

“ There are some parts at least which never deceive; those which exhibit the vices and corruptions of a state. The people groan under the weight of taxes and chains. Hence hatred and vengeance. This is the history of all countries and all ages.”

This brief analysis of the writings of so many celebrated authors, struck me as *piquant*. I expressed my opinion in terms tolerably well

chosen, for it is rare that genius does not communicate its electric spark to that which comes in contact with it. I then turned the conversation on Voltaire himself. I spoke of his works like an individual who knew and valued them. Modène and Montesquiou followed up my eulogiums by quoting passages from the *Henriade*, the *Merope*, and the *Pucelle*. Voltaire seemed pleased in listening to them; then suddenly interrupting them, he said, "There is, after all, one verse which I prefer to all the rest. It is this—

J'ai fait un peu de bien, c'est mon meilleur ouvrage."

"Of course," said I, "a place in heaven belongs to you by right."

"Or one in the shades," replied he laughing; "for as I have spoken slightly of the inhabitants of Olympus, it is possible that they may send me, sooner than I like, to keep company with Socrates, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius."

"You will burn in good company."

"And at least right royal."

The epigram was pointed; but my position precluded me from retorting.

I departed charmed with having seen Voltaire and hoping to revisit him; but death opposed the design. He died on the 28th of May following, directly after taking a draught which the Duke de Richelieu recommended to him. Whilst in the last agony, he repeatedly exclaimed: "My brother Cain; my brother Cain!" And he was in the right to call the duke brother: he was really so; and their common father was the Prince de Canalunga, a Neapolitan, who being equally remarkable for his wit and personal beauty, has caused the mothers of both to appreciate his merits as they deserved. This fact was well known at Versailles: neither was Voltaire ignorant of it, and this was the motive to which he was indebted for that animosity, with which the first gentle-

man of the chamber persecuted him during his whole life.

A moment of deep importance for the king of France approached. Louis XVI. in declaring for or against England, in the war waged by that power against her American colonies, was perhaps about to decide the future destiny of France. The choice was difficult, and I can feel all the indecision of statesmen on such an occasion. It would be wrong, therefore, to condemn the resolution which Louis XVI. came to, for he could not then foresee in what manner the American revolution would re-act on France.

The campaign of 1777, commenced under happy auspices for the American insurgents. Silas O'Deane's visit to Paris had lighted up a vivid sympathy with the cause of liberty in the hearts of Frenchmen. The diffusion of knowledge by the philosophers now began to produce its fruit, and the youth of France quitted the

joys of home and country, to seek for an adventurous glory in the new world.

Meanwhile, Benjamin Franklin appeared among us invested with all the discretion of his green old age. This ambassador possessed a merit highly appreciated in France—that of originality. He spoke a new language—that of patriotism. He was enthusiastic in the midst of reserve; respectful and yet bold; he perfectly fascinated the thinkers and the thoughtless, men and women: and in short, made it a religion amongst us to vow the independence of America.

Franklin, whose straightforwardness made him a skilful diplomatist, felt the whole force of his ascendancy. He easily gained M. de Maurepas, by flattering him with the glory of associating his name with so mighty an enfranchisement. In short, he employed so much address, that the treaty of commerce and alliance with the United States was signed at Ver-

sailles on July the 6th 1778. I confess, in accordance with my principles, I could not approve of the measure; but I kept my opinion to myself, and contented myself with telling the premier—"I am afraid, monsieur, that the cabinet of London will make the king pay dear at the end of his reign, for this proceeding of his at the beginning."

This foresight was too truly realized; for I have had occasion to be convinced, that the English sought every means of injuring our family during the first excesses of the revolution.

Meanwhile we proceeded at the palace from one surprise to another. The queen freed herself more and more every day from the irksome toils of etiquette. One innovation of this kind quite outraged all the antique traditions of the court. The queen, wishing to show a politeness to the mentor, invited Madame de Maurepas to sup with her at Marly in company with Mes-

dames Amelot and Sartines. The Countess de Provence at first refused to sit down at this unceremonious banquet; and I was obliged to employ all my ascendancy to persuade her to yield the cause of her dignity to discretion. She wished me to speak to the king on the subject, but I declined; knowing that I should have taken nothing by my motion. Meanwhile, however, we were tolerably well revenged for our proud complaisance; for poor Madame de Maurepas, whether through *gourmandise* or fear of displeasing the queen, would not allow herself to refuse anything which was offered during the whole repast, and put herself to considerable inconvenience and suffering in consequence, which, instead of sympathy, only excited laughter, and gave rise to several caustic jokes at the sufferer's expense.

The celebrated Rousseau died this year on the 3rd of July, at Ermenonville. I merely mention the fact, although I had never any

direct communication with him. It is to be regretted that so much genius was, in his case, associated with so little nobleness of soul. It may be truly said, that his style was that of a god, and his soul that of a footman.

The passion for gambling became every day more intense at court. The queen herself felt a perfect mania in being seated for hours at a green table. It was there that the fortunes of the greater part of the courtiers were engulfed. The banker, Chalabre, made enormous gains and losses alternately by false play. It is impossible to conceive with what impudence cheating at play was carried on in this sanctuary of good company. Whether old dowagers, or young lords,—no one considered there was the least harm in cheating the croupiers. At last things were carried so far, that it was found necessary to sew a ribbon across the table, and declare that nothing would be paid to the glittering piles of money vested in the stakes beyond that line.

The Duchess de —— was the first occasion of this dishonourable precaution. She was in the habit of never staking against the banks before her, unless on a winning colour, and in the opposite case, of declaring that she was out of the game. If the matter was insisted on, she exclaimed aloud, and gave herself the airs of persecuted innocence. No other means could therefore be devised for defeating her ill-faith than the expedient to which I have referred.

The king was deeply grieved at seeing the progress of this unbridled extravagance. But the ascendancy of the queen over his mind had obtained new force, since she was declared *en-cointe*, and he did not dare, except at the last extremity, to distress her with the slightest remonstrance. I have already confessed that I was hurried away by the evil example round me, and played as high as the rest; and as I neither could nor would correct the chances of fortune no more than the Count d'Artois, we

gambled away pretty considerable sums. However, he was more unlucky than me, because he played for larger stakes.

It was above all at Marly, where the rage for gambling exhibited itself without restraint; at Marly, where, thanks to the relaxation of etiquette, every body might appear in undress and mingle in the game, by the aid of the dowagers, who never quitted the table, provided a portion of the gains were consigned to them: but these ladies studied to render their diversions affairs of permanent profit. The whole world, therefore, crowded there unceremoniously, and as the phrase is, *en polisson*. What crowds of ignoble vulgarians intermingled there with the most chivalrous names and titles of France!

One evening, the Count de Tavannes came up to me, with consternation painted on his countenance, and scarcely able to stammer out what he had to communicate. "Ah, monseigneur," said he in a whisper, "what an outrage!

Do you observe a little lower, near yonder console, a man in a rose-colour suit, with a waist-coat frosted with blue and silver, and who wears spectacles?"

"Yes.—I see nothing in his appearance to justify your state of terror."

"That is because you do not know him, monseigneur. Otherwise, your hair would stand on end."

"What? is it then," exclaimed I, scarcely able to articulate, "the ——"

"The executioner of the guillotine. You have guessed it, monseigneur; and this frightful apparition in such a place will explain to you my terror."

I must confess that a cold thrill passed through my veins; I could scarcely credit such effrontery as his daring to appear in the midst of the court circle. I even fancied that this horrible personage examined the king with a sinister pertinacity. The recollection of his

cool audacity makes me tremble in spite of myself. The count asked me in conclusion what was best to be done.

“Don’t say a word to any body,” I replied. “Leave to me the task of getting rid of this insolent wretch without disturbance, unless you wish yourself to undertake it.”

The count started back two paces at the suggestion, and having looked round, I perceived at a little distance, Prince Saint Maurice, M. de Montbarrey’s son, and colonel of my Swiss guard. I beckoned him to me, and after pointing out the obnoxious personage, enjoined him to order him to withdraw unobserved. Saint Maurice, who had no suspicion of the real nature of the commission I invested him with, conformed to my orders. I surveyed the personage in the *rose-coloured suit, with the blue waistcoat of frosted silver*, with intense interest, while my emissary communicated my orders. I observed him turn as pale as death, and then

throwing a ferocious look on Saint Maurice, silently withdraw. Some years after, the unhappy Saint Maurice fell into the hands of the person he had thus expelled from the drawing-room at Marly. A little superstition might tempt me to believe, that this functionary of death had sought to anticipate his future duties, by coming to select his most illustrious victims.

I exacted from Count Tavannes the greatest secrecy on what had occurred; and I am now revealing it for the first time.

CHAPTER X.

Details of the Queen's first accouchement—The new-born a daughter—Madame Royale—The Count de Provence justifies himself—Apropos quotation—Wager on an act of memory—The author applies it to his niece—It is imputed to him as a crime—Intrigues of the Gramonts and Polignacs—Conversation of Madame Tartufe—Luxemburg given to the author by the King—Churching of the Queen—Cool reception by the people—Ill-humour of a great princess—Got-up scene at a family supper—Its termination by the Countess de Provence—Pleasures of winter—Declaration of war against England by Spain.

THE accouchement of the queen was daily expected, and all France prayed for a dauphin without consulting my wishes. She was at length delivered of a girl on the 11th of De-

ember, 1775, at thirty-five minutes past eleven in the morning. At the moment that Vermont the queen's surgeon, announced the result, we rose to approach her ; the *garde des sceaux* did the same, and the crowd, according to custom admitted into the adjoining rooms, rushed suddenly into the queen's chamber, and were nearly throwing the large tapestry screens, which the king had ordered to be put up the day before, through fear of accident, on the queen's bed. The intruders could with difficulty be turned out, and the king, with his Herculean strength, threw up an immense sash-window, which had been carefully made air-tight by being pasted over with paper.

The joy which was on the point of bursting forth, was somewhat chilled by the exclamation, "It's a daughter." Eyes were turned on me to see what I thought of the Salic law ; but I preserved my countenance. The king bit his lips ; the queen stifled a sigh ; but better suc-

cess was hoped next time. It was said that Cupid would follow the Graces; and that the rose would precede the lilly. It was as well to be contented with this elegant consolation for want of better, and, meanwhile, to compliment Madame Royale on her appearance.

Malignity, which never sleeps, and which has always assailed us with its envenomed darts, did not suffer me to escape on this occasion.

The narrative appears as follows in the Secret Memoirs of Bachaumont. On the 12th of January, 1779, Monsieur acted the part of godfather by proxy for the king of Spain, at the baptism of Madame Royale; on the question of the grand almoner as to the child's name, Monsieur replied, "But something previous is necessary; it is requisite first to ascertain who are the father and mother; that is what the ceremonial prescribes."

The charitable souls about court, inferred from this account, which has since been sup-

pressed, that my questions tended to throw doubt on the paternity of my brother. Never was so atrocious a calumny built on so slight a foundation. The real truth is as follows.

We had been reading *en famille*, a few days previously, the charming comedy of "La Gageure Imprévue," which was about to be brought out at the queen's theatre. The king, relying on his knowledge as a locksmith, affirmed that, in the place of M. de Clainville, he should not have forgotten the key. He took an opportunity on this occasion, to enlarge at length on the necessity of being acquainted with professional terms. I retaliated by saying, that by the same rule, all public men ought to be familiar with the ceremonials in which they are called to take a part. The king jocosely said, "that he should try me on this proficiency on an earlier occasion than I might expect; and," added the king, "if I catch you tripping, I reserve to myself the right of a hearty laugh at

your expense." Out of this understanding arose the circumstance I have referred to; for the king, just as the grand almoner approached to begin the ceremony, whispered in my ear, "This is the time, brother, I select to put your proficiency in ceremonial to the test."

Meanwhile the queen was creating fresh enemies at court by the continual partiality she exhibited to the Polignacs. The Duke de Villeroi having no children, his office of captain of the guards was vigorously canvassed; and a positive promise was made by the king to Madame de Civrac, in favour of her son, the Duke de Lorges. But it happened that Mademoiselle de Polignac, who was just turned thirty, highly accomplished, and excessively beautiful, was on the point of being married. The Countess de Grammont, one of the queen's ladies, had consented to this young beauty's union with her son, provided he was created a duke and obtained the reversion of M. de Villeroi's place,

which had been promised to Madame de Civrac. The queen, delighted to please the favourite, resolved to take the necessary steps to overcome Madame de Civrac's natural reluctance. A scene took place in consequence between Mesdames de Civrac and Polignac, worthy of Molière. The first, who called on the latter to get her to renounce her object, was received in the most obliging manner; but her only reply was, "that it was impossible to refuse the kind favours of the queen."

"But, madame," said the Duchess de Civrac, "the object is to rob me, in order to transfer the booty to you."

"But the queen is so condescending."

"*Bien obligée pour moi*; but the place was first promised to me."

"I can only be the more grateful to the queen for her kindness."

"But will you permit me to be the victim of the favours you receive?"

“ I can only say that her majesty’s generosity to her friends is unbounded.”

“ But, madame, this is committing a grievous outrage.”

“ Ah ! madame, pray do not calumniate her majesty ; no one in the world can be so kind.”

Nothing could drive Madame de Polignac out of this entrenchment of apology, till her visitor, finally finding resistance unavailable, was obliged to ground arms, and surrender at discretion. However, they made her a compensation of 100,000 écus down, and an annual pension of 50,000 livres ; for it was impossible to pay too much for any advantage to the Polignacs.

On the 8th of January, 1779, the king, by letters patent, made me a grant of the Luxembourg palace. On the same day died Lantara, a distinguished painter, who passed his life in an alehouse, and died in an hospital. Un-

happily one too often sees great genius united to great debauchery.

On the 8th of February the churching of the queen took place at Paris. There were plenty of long speeches, prayers without end, but few applauses. The queen expected that her new condition of mother would awaken the attachment of the Parisians; but she had deceived herself; there was nothing but coldness instead of enthusiasm; and the procession, which begun in gaiety, ended in silence. The king could not comprehend this indifference, and repeatedly questioned the Dukes de Fleury and d'Ayen on the subject. While they sought shelter in evasion, the queen indignantly remarked, "These are the fruits, sire, of the libels incessantly propagated against us."

"But what can I be reproached with?" inquired the king; "I do my best, and the people ought at least to be grateful."

"Madame," said I, in my turn, addressing

the queen, " we are all in the same boat ; and I can assure you I am not spared more than yourself."

The queen made no reply, imagining, probably, that I was alluding to her dependants, who in fact kept no terms towards me.

After the ceremony we went to pass the evening at La Muette ; an attempt was made to give a tone of gaiety to the conversation, but nothing could prevail over the queen's sorrow at being so obviously deprived of the good-will of the people. She complained bitterly of the injustice that was done her, and was so hurried away by the violence of her emotion, as to make an appeal to the company, and to ask them what could justly be alleged against her.

We all trembled at this unexpected question, because none of us wished to make ourselves the scape-goat of a reply.

Fortunately the king, seeing our embarrassment, interfered to mitigate the queen's grief,

by remarking that the weather was unfavourable, and that in fact the warmest attachment was not proof against a severe frost.

“I am obliged to you, sire,” replied the queen sorrowfully, “for your good-intentioned consolation; but I cannot disguise from myself that the people are gradually withdrawing their affection from me, without my being conscious of deserving it. This can only be the result of a settled conspiracy to sink me in public estimation.”

CHAPTER XI.

The Queen has the Small Pox—Visit of Madame de Polignac to her—Observation of the Prince de Poix—The unpopularity of the Count d'Artois—The Fanfaronnade of the Duke Lauzun—Quiz on the Mouchys—Too much Amusement indulged—The King is dissatisfied at it—His pass-word at the Palace—The Queen caught by it—M. de Maurepas ridiculed—Fête at Saint Cloud—Inoculation of Madame Elizabeth—A sorrowful Quotation—Duel of the Prince de Condé and M. d'Agoult—The Count d'Estaing at Versailles—His opinion on the state of the Navy—Marriage of the Maréchal Duke de Richelieu.

THE queen had the small-pox this year, which she caught of the Countess de Polignac. The medical faculty thought it necessary to separate them; but an incessant communication by letter

was kept up between the friends. At length they were permitted to meet, and the queen went *incognita*, but with great pomp, to dine with the favourite at her hotel in the Rue de Bourbon at Paris. On this occasion the marriage of Mademoiselle de Polignac with M. de Grammont was definitively settled ; and the queen, over and above her own splendid grants to the future bridegroom, induced the king to give him a yearly pension of 30,000 livres. How was it possible to resist so overwhelming a liberality !

The Polignac family had done me many an ill turn ; they had compromised the Maréchal de Broglie with my wife, in attributing speeches to him which he had never made. In seeking to discover the source of these calumnies, we uniformly traced them to the Hotel, Rue de Bourbon. How could I be surprised, therefore, at the coolness of the queen, when her most intimate friends were imbued with such feelings towards me ?

Although the Maréchal de Broglie stood high in public estimation, M. de Montbarrey, conscious of his own insufficiency, would not tolerate military talents in others, and refused to employ him. An expedition was then fitting out against Ireland; and the conversation turned upon it at the residence of the Count d'Artois.

"Faith," said the latter, "the war minister is rather strict in his choice of volunteers; he will not have any thing to do with me nor you, De Poix, nor you, Coigny, nor even with the Maréchal de Broglie, as leaders of the expedition."

"There is some little distinction to be made," returned the Prince de Poix; "and we need not be surprised at his declining the services of *your royal highness* as well as of myself, Coigny, and others. But De Broglie is another affair; since the whole *nation* is aware of *his* merit."

This was true enough, and it was in fact the reason that he was not appointed.

Admiral Count d'Estaing was meanwhile maintaining the glory of the French flag. His success was the more opportune, as the government stood in need of something to raise it in the estimation of the public, which nourished its prejudices against the royal family with an incessant publication of epigrams and lampoons. It was in fact a new *fronde* on a small scale. We did not take a single step, nor make a single remark, without being subjected to criticism. I constantly preached up to the Count d'Artois the necessity of changing his mode of life; but he only laughed at my sermons, and supplied additional food to the malice of his enemies. Even the willing fair ones of the theatre, whose talents or beauty became objects of attraction, permitted themselves to treat him in the most uncereemonious manner. Mademoiselle Contat, among others, took it into her head to make a present of the hundred louis which he sent to her, as a compensation for a quarter of an hour's

conversation, to the footman who was the bearer of my brother's message.

This prince suffered himself to be affronted with impunity. The Duke de Lauzun, one of the greatest rakes in France, and who was unfortunately possessed of the Count d'Artois' confidence, made him wait at the door in a manner unworthy of his rank, while he kept an appointment with a lady to whom his royal highness professed a simultaneous attachment. I learnt this anecdote the next day, for Lauzun made a boast of it, with his customary impudence. This courtier expiated, on the revolutionary scaffold, the ingratitude he exhibited to our family during the revolution. He served in the American war, and made a point of making a great fuss about the most trivial exploit. For example, the fort of Senegal, which he gave out that he stormed after an obstinate attack, consisted of a garrison of four English soldiers, of whom three were invalids. The

Duke de Choiseul said on this occasion that the only effective man in the garrison having honourably surrendered, was of course entitled to the honours of war. In fact, Lauzun really gave out on his return to France, that the garrison had marched out in that manner, with lighted matches, drums beating and colours flying.

About this time the Maréchale de Mouchy broke her arm by an accidental fall, and the wags pretended to say that the wound would be recorded in her husband's war-office reports. The queen went several times to see her, in order to make her amends for the jokes that were cut at her expense.

The king, who occasionally had his jokes when he was in a good humour, played off a trick on the queen, which produced rather disagreeable consequences.

The king went to bed at eleven o'clock precisely every night; but the intimate society of the palace often quitted Versailles after he

withdrew, to seek amusement at Paris or elsewhere; and on some occasions, in order to hasten the convenience of his absence, the hand of the clock was put on. One evening that Louis XVI. discovered this trickery, he issued an order to shut the palace gates at a certain time, and allow no one, without exception, to re-enter.

At one in the morning the queen and the Count d'Artois presented themselves at the wicket—"Halt! no one passes," cried the sentinel.

The queen gave her name, but the sentinel persisted in his refusal. Marie-Antoinette becoming angry, sent for the Duke de Villeroi, captain of the guards; but he informed her that he had received the king's formal order to open the door to nobody, and that he could not disobey it. The mortification of the queen may be easily conceived, when she found herself obliged to retrace her steps, in order to hunt out some

private door to which the royal order did not apply. The next day my sister-in-law had a regular quarrel with the king, who maintained his decision firmly, observing that, as he rose early, he could not allow his rest to be disturbed; and that the other residents of the palace must conform accordingly. The queen retired in great pique, and it was only by the mediation of M. de Maurepas that the quarrel was reconciled; the latter inducing the king to except the queen alone from his sweeping measure of exclusion. This order, though of little importance otherwise, swelled into consequence, and gave occasion for conjectures and misinterpretations unfavourable to the queen's character.

A few days after, the royal family attended the annual *fête* at Saint Cloud, in great pomp. On this occasion my younger brother took his seat on the coach-box—an English custom just then introduced into France. For my part, I

never would imitate it persuaded that the state carriage is the only one a prince ought to drive. As for D'Artois, he was quite proud of his new dignity of coachman, without thinking of applying the apposite quotation of Racine :

“ Pour toute qualité, pour vertu singulière,
Il excelle à conduire un char dans la carrière,
A disputer des prix indignes de ses mains,
A se donner lui-même en spectacle aux Romains.”

An affair took place about this time between the prince de Condé and M. d'Agoult, an officer in the French guards. There happened to exist, as fate would have it, a certain Madame de Courtebonne, a widow somewhere about forty, of good condition, rather doubtful beauty, and attached to the service of the Duchess de Bourbon. This lady, who had made gallantry the occupation of her whole life, continued it as a matter of habit. Though past a certain age, her wit and vivacity obtained her many an

admirer. M. d'Agoult held the first rank among them, till the prince de Condé, forgetting his allegiance to Madame de Manaco, came to lay his admiration at her feet. Female cruelty to a prince of the blood is rather a rare occurrence. The prince was immediately accepted, and in order to pay him all the honour due to his rank, M. d'Agoult was as uncere- moniously dismissed. The cashiered lover began to look about him for the cause of his disaster, found it out, made a great outcry, admitted the public into the secret of his grief, without exhibiting much fear of injuring the reputation of the lady; in short, the matter made a general stir from Versailles to Paris.

The Prince de Condé heard of this, and a duel was the consequence. The prince proposed to D'Agoult to meet with swords in the Champs de Mars, at eight o'clock. The two champions were exact to their appointment, and the duel took place without any overture

on the part of the challenger, who, having more skill or more luck than the prince, gave him a slight wound. The affair was then compromised by the seconds, and the parties quitted the ground. M. d'Agoult returned to Paris, and the prince, through an impulse of chivalrous generosity, proceeded to present himself before the king at Versailles, in order to establish an alibi, if it should be necessary, in favour of his opponent. At the request of the prince, M. de Maurepas induced the king, though disapproving duels, because they placed the nobility on too great a par with the royal family, to overlook the affair. It has been said that the Bourbon princes disapproved of the conduct of the Prince de Condé, and that was natural. I indeed was the first to blame him, and he warmly replied, "Be assured, monseigneur, that the click of a sword is like festival music to my ear. I should not have dared to look my lowest scullion in the face if I had refused satisfaction to a gentleman."

At the beginning of 1780, Admiral Count d'Estaing arrived at Versailles, in order to be presented to the king by M. de Sartines. The latter forgot to apprize his majesty, and the reception did not take place, much to the resentment of the spoilt child of public favour, who expressed his wrath against M. de Sartines in the rough phraseology of a seaman, to M. de Maurepas. The admiral was then in the zenith of his popularity. I granted him a private audience, during which he hesitated not to speak in unqualified censure of several of his *chefs d'escadre* and their subordinate officers; he apprized me that the pride and jealousy of the junior officers towards their superiors would ruin the French navy; that they would sooner suffer a defeat than contribute to the promotion of an admiral; and that the whole navy wanted a new organization; at the same time speaking in the highest terms of eulogium of the opposite spirit which reigned in the

English navy. I was greatly grieved to hear this, though I was incapable of suggesting a remedy ; but I was in hopes that the admiral had exaggerated these facts, in order to make his services more requisite as minister of marine. He one evening supped with the royal family, and received all the honours of the table ; so much so, that his wounded leg was supported by a tabouret, which the queen condescended to bring herself. His court favour, however, soon changed complexion ; he took pique at something, and ranged himself among the malcontents. The queen had no great cause of gratitude to him at the revolution, for he commanded the national guard of Versailles, and imparted to them an unfavourable bias. However, whatever faults he had, he subsequently paid for them by the loss of his head ; and the revolutionary tribunal proved to him that there is no ingratitude like that of the populace, which our age has erected into a new power,

but which is occasionally the most relentless of tyrants.

I ought here to mention the third nuptials of the Maréchal Duke de Richelieu, who at the age of eighty-four fell in love with Madame de Rooth, a relative of De Choiseul. This widow had been canoness of Remiremont before his first marriage. I jokingly told M. de Richelieu, that his marriage would cause some inquietude to M. de Fronsac.

"I hope," replied he, "Monseigneur, to give him a new brother before the end of the year."

"No exploit can surprise me from you," I replied.

But, however, the result proved that I flattered the duke on this occasion.

CHAPTER XII.

M. Necker intrigues—He attacks the Counts de Provence and D'Artois and the Grand Officers of the Household—Louis XVI. and Madame de Brienne—Sarcasm of the Mentor—The Coachman of M. de Brancas—Cause of M. de Montbarrey's fall—M. de Puységur appointed War Minister—Tragical death of Madame de Maurepas' favourite cat—Its results—The Count de Provence ridicules M. Necker—The King speaks to him on the subject—His reply—Soirées at Madame de Polignac's—The Queen performs a part in a Comedy—The Countess of Balby—Anger of the Duchess de Lesparre—Birth of Jules de Polignac.

M. NECKER deeming it expedient to perpetuate his tenure of office, by winning the support of the people, resolved, as a first step, to make himself unpopular at court. This false calculation turned

against himself. He began by instituting a reform in the king's household, intending to pay his respects in turn to us and others of established credit. No doubt his intentions were good in the main; but their mode of execution was very bad. He ought at least to have employed conciliatory means, and not to turn his back on those who were able to make head against him; myself, for example, who cordially detested him at last, although I began by having a regard for him.

He knew that my pension could not be sufficient for me, considering the demands of my expensive establishment. The king had hitherto assisted me by an annual grant of 3,700,000 livres. I contracted no debts, while the Count d'Artois, who had a much more considerable income, was in debt to every body. Deducting from our incomes was detracting from our means of honourable reputation; in the same manner as diminishing the salaries of the royal

household was lessening the importance of the functionaries, and consequently it made them sworn enemies.

But all these considerations had no effect upon the ministerial reformer ; he terrified the king by the prospect of a national bankruptcy, if his rigorous measures of economy were not adopted ; and his majesty, in order to avoid so great a disaster, promised to support his plan. Trusting to this support, the minister talked of examining, verifying, and regulating the smallest expenses, and began to take steps for reducing his plan to execution.

A general outcry was raised by those whose pockets were menaced by this reform. All the great officers of the household who had any accounts to make up, formed a close alliance, published protests, and especially applied to the Countess de Polignac, who was herself interested in opposing such innovations. They further appealed to the interposition of the queen, who

on her side felt no great pleasure in seeing the reformer clip the wings of her most intimate friends. Madame de Brienne, who was accustomed to hold her head very high since our alliance with the house of Lorraine, took upon herself to remonstrate with the king upon the subject, who, although he was weak enough to allow millions to be uselessly squandered, would have made a scruple about spending a crown if he thought there was no real want of it. In reply he recommended her not to meddle with the affairs of his household, as she was not bound to pay his debts, and Madame de Brienne went off in a huff to M. de Maurepas, to complain of the little respect that was paid to her relationship with the house of Austria.

“Alas, madam!” ironically replied the minister, “I feel so sincerely the extent of the indignity you have received, that if I were you, I would not hesitate one moment to quit France, in order to return to that august family whose connexion you so greatly boast.”

This banter was more effectual than the rough sincerity of the king; it entirely disarmed the lady, who, being well aware that neither in Austria nor in Tuscany could she enjoy the advantages she enjoyed in France, sounded her retreat and entrenched herself within the line of the intrigues, which were continually undermining the minister up to the period of his first disgrace.

An amusing scene took place this year, at a public audience given by the Prince de Montbarrey. The Marquis Le Tourneur, major of the Count d'Artois' body guard, and one of those old Drawcansirs, always ready to pick up a quarrel, was driving along the Boulevard du Temple, in a light and elegant cabriolet, which excited the envy of all the amateurs, when he was suddenly crossed by the carriage of the Count de Brancas, which was whisking along with all the rapidity which two vigorous Norman horses, incessantly flogged by

a Picard coachman could impart. The obstacle only seemed to redouble the energy of the latter; a collision took place, and the marquis's light vehicle was shattered to atoms. The marquis extricated himself as well as he could out of the wreck, abandoned the scattered fragments of the equipage to his groom, called a fiacre, and by the opportune exhibition of some pieces of gold, induced the driver to follow at full gallop the insolent charioteer, who had reduced him to so pitiable a condition. At length he reached the vehicle, just as it stopped in M. de Montbarrey's court-yard.

The Comte de Brancas alighted and proceeded to the minister's audience chamber. M. de Tourneur was announced directly after, and without paying the least attention to the company hurried up to M. de Brancas, and loudly complaining of the insolence of his coachman, demanded his instant dismissal. The duke muttered some excuses, but they did not satisfy

the complainant, who gave him no alternative but the man's dismissal or a duel. In consequence of this, the duke, who was a friend of peace and professed a respect to the ordinance against duelling, no longer hesitated to comply with the urgency of the marquis. He went down with him into the courtyard, and after severely reprimanding the impertinent coachman in the presence of numerous witnesses, discharged him on the spot.

The Prince de Montbarrey, in whose house this unseemly discussion took place, and who affected to take no notice of it at the time, was no sooner aware that De Tourneur was out of the ministry, than he made bitter complaints of his disrespectful conduct. The latter, on the other hand, knowing that the prince was not in the good graces of the king, took his measures accordingly. He wrote a letter to the Prince de Montbarrey, in which he excused himself for any offence he might have given him,

adding, that he was ready to give him all the satisfaction he might wish, and, to prevent the imputation of military subordination, was willing to resign his post. This challenge gave mortal offence to Montbarrey; but as he was aware that he was in the wrong, he replied that some calumniators must have misinterpreted his words, and that he had no intention of giving him offence. Le Tourneur, satisfied with this explanation, showed the letter to every body, and the war minister was obliged to put up with a mystification which served as a prelude to his downfall.

One of the principal causes, however, that led to that downfall, was the insatiable rapacity of his mistress, Mademoiselle Renaud. Any thing more grasping than this personage was never seen. She jobbed in every thing; military posts of the highest rank, crosses of St. Louis, retired allowances, commissaryships, &c. ; in short, it was not for want of good will on her part, that she did not absorb the whole of the minister's official salary.

I took an interest in Montbarrey, because I was not dissatisfied with seeing one of my servants in so important a situation. I therefore took upon myself to recommend his sacrificing Mademoiselle Renaud to public opinion ; but he exclaimed that it was all slander, and that no woman could be more disinterested. I adduced *facts*, but he still persisted in asserting the innocence of his *dulcinea* ; from which I inferred, that he might probably go partners with her in the booty, and I ended our conference by a laugh and a quotation from Plautus.

Est etiam, ubi profecto damnum præsta facere quam lucrum.

This Renaud, who was as impudent as she was pretty, paraded a scandalously luxurious mode of life. Mademoiselles Guimard and Raucourt were nothing to her, and I am satisfied she never squandered less (during Montbarrey's war ministry) than 600,000 livres annually. The Duke d'Ayen used to say that

her house resembled a fair, in consequence of the variety and magnificence of the articles of furniture. All Paris exclaimed against it. Her extravagance, which at last reached the queen's ears, finally ruined Montbarrey in her opinion. I have good knowledge that Marie-Antoinette quietly asked several officers, when they came to return her thanks for their appointments, how much they had paid in bribes to Mademoiselle Renaud.

The premier turned a deaf ear to all this, though he was perfectly aware of what was passing. It was the wish of his wife that the prince should retain the war office, and the husband was too complaisant to oppose his wife's inclinations. He cut a joke or two at her protégé's expense, and then, underhand, looked out for a substitute for him, so as not to be left at a nonplus in case he should be obliged to dismiss him. His choice fell upon M. de Puysegur, a military man of merit, well in-

formed, and governed by a fastidious probity which was a perfect phenomenon at court. He had, besides, served with some distinction, and possessed the esteem and affection of the army.

But the premier had at this time some domestic embarrassments of too great importance to permit him to think of anything else: he found it necessary to console his wife for the loss of her favourite cat, whom the king had incurred the misfortune to kill. Poor Madame de Maurepas was overwhelmed with affliction, and all Versailles was in a perfect tumult at this great disaster.

I think I have before said that Madame de Maurepas' cat, aware of all the privileges of a court favourite, occasionally disdained the homage she received in the drawing-room, for the sake of the company of more humble but more agreeable friends on the roof of the palace. It has been also before stated, that Louis XVIth's workshop was in the attic floor. Mademoiselle Grimal-

kin, with the caprice of a spoilt child, or a spoilt cat if you please, precisely chose that sacred spot for the purpose of giving audience to the cats of the vicinity. During their revels they knocked down the tools, spoilt the royal Vulcan's most favourite and most finished pieces of locksmith workmanship, and, in short, caused such a destruction as no good operative could put up with, and much less such an operative as the king of France.

Louis XVI., who was not aware of the importance of Mademoiselle Grimalkin, and who was moreover nearsighted, no sooner perceived the disorder of his workshop, than he resolved to take summary measures against the insurrection of cats. He was not slow in perceiving which was the most guilty individual, and poor Grimalkin felt the whole weight of his resentment. The king dealt her a most effectual blow on the head with his blacksmith's hammer, and sent her off to make her tragic exit from this life in the lap

of the Countess de Maurepas. At the sight of this tragical catastrophe, the patroness's grief was only equalled by her resentment, and previous to yielding to the one, she resolved to gratify the other. All was bustle in the palace; the most rigorous researches were made. At length the name of the culprit was ascertained, and poor Madame de Maurepas was obliged to suppress her vow of revenge, on finding that the murderer was inviolable by law.

But the discovery did not appease her; her first intention was to hurry to his majesty, lay the dead cat before him, and reproach him for his disrespect and cruelty. But such a design frightened the husband, who did all he could to dissuade her; alarmed at the idea of offending his wife on one hand, and of losing his place on the other. He therefore found it expedient to put all his diplomatic experience into action, and called in the aid of our aunt, the Princess Adelaide. She, good soul, after considerable

efforts, succeeded in calming the rash despair of madame, and took upon herself to mediate in the business, by revealing his involuntary enormity to the king, and getting him to make reparation by apology, which my royal brother assented to with the best grace in world. It may be easily conceived, therefore, that the premier had something more important to think of than the triumphs of the American war, or the delinquencies of the war office.

I had also my share of disagreeables; the harsh manner in which M. Necker carried on his plans of reform, obliged me to dismiss some of my best servants, whose conduct I could not but approve. My dislike to this was transferred to the comptroller-general, and I ridiculed him under the form of *letters patent*, which I drew up without employing any intermediate pen.

As soon as Necker was informed of this, his offended vanity induced him to complain to the king, assuring him that all France would suffer

by the disrespect I had shown him. His majesty sent for me the same day, in order to learn what these letters-patent were, about which so great a stir was made.

“Why, to say the truth, sire,” I replied, “they are neither more nor less than the humiliating confession of the painful position in which M. Necker endeavours to place me. Moreover, having an objection to his intermeddling with my affairs, I have taken steps to anticipate him by regulating them myself.

Louis XVI., however, having insisted on my changing the form of these letters, I thought it right to comply, and withdrew the copies I had already handed in, a circumstance which prevents me inserting them in these memoirs.

The result did not, however, reconcile me with the finance minister, who never forgave my hoax; *inde iræ*; he, as well as his daughter, became my irreconcilable enemies.

While I was thus exerting myself to extri-

cate myself from my embarrassments, the queen continued to revel in a life of enjoyment, and consecrate to pleasure all the time she did not devote to public business. Her attachment to the Polignacs was at its height. The Countess Jules being this year in the family-way, Marie-Antoinette went regularly to Paris to visit her, and intended to be present at her accouchment. I generally accompanied her in these rides, though neither I nor my wife were much pleased with doing homage at the court of the favourite, and swelling the number of her retinue. At least Madame de Polignac, who was all-influential on the mind of the Count d'Artois, might have deterred him from making too common a show of himself, or at least from taking a fancy to certain pursuits incompatible with his rank. For example, he had been induced by his *coterie* of advisers, to learn to dance upon the tight-rope. At first he did so privately, but merely because he did not want the blunders and downfalls of

his apprenticeship to be laughed at. It was the Countess de Provence who first informed me of this silly fancy. "Are you aware," said she, "that your family are about to add a new and illustrious talent to their other glorious acquisitions. Louis XIV. used to dance at the court ballets, but the Count d'Artois is more ambitious, and aspires to the reputation of exhibiting his proficiency as a tight-rope dancer." I should have laughed at this, if I had not considered the honour of the family at stake. I tried to deny the truth of the story, but I was supplied with too strong proofs, and the first time I met my royal brother, the tight-rope dancer, I complimented him more bitterly than jocosely on his new and dignified profession. He sneered in return, pretended that the exercise was favourable to his health, and that he had never been so well in his life as since he devoted himself to it. My only resource was, therefore, to shrug my

shoulders and be silent. My hobby, meanwhile, was to protect the arts and sciences, to assemble round me the flower of literary talent, and to study our ancient laws and institutions. The king, who gave me no part in public affairs, occasionally invested me, nevertheless, with honourable functions. On the 16th of June 1780, I was commissioned, by virtue of an express delegation from the king of Spain, to confer the collar of the Golden Fleece on two French knights of the order; viz., the Marquis d'Ossun and the Duke d'Ayen.

For some time past the Countess de Provence had taken an affection for her lady-in-waiting, the Countess de Balby. This lady united to much talent and vivacity, an elegant demeanour and a charming person. I felt pleasure in conversing with her; and on further acquaintance, entertained for her a sincere affection. The Countess de Provence having resolved that this lady should have the reversion of the Duchess de Lespare's

place of chief lady-in-waiting, the latter made strong objections. It was one of the defects of all persons attached to the royal family, to entertain the desire of transmitting their offices as if they had been hereditary. Madame de Lespare, actuated by this feeling, resolved to resign her own place, sooner than yield her right of transmitting it. She accordingly resigned, to the great regret of my wife, who entertained a sincere affection for her ; and the Countess de Balby having taken her place, was presented to the king and queen in quality of her new function on the 9th of July. From that period she constituted part of our most intimate domestic arrangement. She mitigated the solemn reserve which the countess had introduced, diffused a a livelier charm over our society, and acquired the sincere attachment of her mistress, which lasted as long as she lived.

Madame de Polignac was this year delivered of her second son, Jules de Polignac. His birth

was celebrated as if he had been a prince of the blood. All the court went to pay their compliments to the mother, who shortly after became hereditary Duchess de Polignac, by the appointment of her husband to the title of duke.

CHAPTER XIII.

Death of the Empress Maria-Theresa—Joseph II.—Dismission of M. de Montbarrey—Two similar syllables in two words confer a ministerial place—Private play at Trianon—Littleness of the Duke de Fronsac—Countess d'Artois—Dispute between the Countess de Provence and the Queen—Bon-mot of the Count d'Artois—Family details—What spectators are invited—Separation of the Duke and Duchess of Bourbon—Its consequences—The Count d'Artois opposes M. Necker—The Count de Provence confers with the King.

THE Empress Maria-Theresa, mother of Marie-Antoinette, died on the 29th of November, 1780. Her daughter was deeply afflicted by her death; up to the period of which, she had remained completely under the maternal

yoke. Great delicacy was observed in breaking the news to her, and the king, who had never before spoken to the Abbé de Vermont, made use of his intermediation. Joseph II., who succeeded his mother Maria-Theresa on the throne of Germany, was a great man spoiled. He wished to pass off for an original; whereas, he was, in fact, nothing but a feeble copy of Frederic of Prussia. He passed his whole life in labouring to make a reputation which died with him. Opposed to the clergy in his character of a half-and-half philosopher, he dissatisfied every body, and caused the revolt of the Netherlands. Seeking glory for the gratification of his vanity, rather than from an heroic instinct, and having no original genius, he merely trod in the wheel-marks of his great model of Prussia and the Empress Catherine, whom he ridiculed because he was unable to equal. He disliked France, and would have done it all the harm in his power. He died on the throne without leaving

any posterity ; and his name will be lost among the crowd of princes who take pains to make themselves somebody and finish by becoming nobody.

The death of the empress did not put a stop to our court intrigues. The extravagances of the Prince de Montbarrey, and the embezzlements of his mistress, augmented every day ; but the prince was too infatuated with her, and the means she supplied, to foresee the consequences. Taking advantage of this, MM. de Bezenval, de Vaudreuil, and d'Alhémar, never ceased urging the queen, to give their friend M. de Ségur his place. Madame de Polignac also supported them. Their candidate possessed, besides, qualifications well adapted for his post ; and a man thus supported, could hardly fail of the acquisition.

While this was passing, the queen recommended an officer to Montbarrey, as a fit person to have a vacant post. The war minister

promised obedience ; but Mademoiselle Renaud had already sold it, and refused to disburse the sum she had received ; in short, the protégé of the queen, was supplanted by the protégé of the *fille de joie*.

Such audacity as this was no longer to be borne. The queen solicited the dismissal of Montbarrey from the king ; the latter only objected the difficulty of a substitute. Marie-Antoinette then proposed M. de Ségur : and the king having heard the name of Puy-ségur, dinned in his ears as a proper person by his mentor, congratulated himself on his tact in satisfying two persons at once, and agreed to the queen's proposal.

M. de Maurepas came next ; affecting at first disinclination to the dismissal of his wife's protégé. But the king two days after returned to the charge, and evasion was no longer possible. In his fright, Montbarrey came to me and begged me to support him. I was too cautious

to implicate myself, and recommended him to die with a good grace. At length, finding resistance unavailing, he resolved, on the 18th of December 1780, to give in his resignation, and quitted Versailles with feelings ulcerated against every body and every thing, although he had no one to blame for the catastrophe but himself.

Now was the time for M. de Maurepas. Convinced that he had sufficiently prepared the king for accepting M. de Puységur, he had delayed his actual recommendation to the last moment. "The thing is already concluded," replied the king to the minister's overture. "The queen has also solicited me in favour of your protégé; and M. de Ségur is already in possession of my promise."

"How, sire! the Marquis de Ségur?"

"Yes, your own recommendation; you cannot but be gratified. This gentleman is moreover generally esteemed, and I am obliged to you for introducing him to my notice."

Poor M. de Maurepas was so confounded, as to be incapable of finding words to express his astonishment. He was caught in his own toils; but he felt that it was necessary to dissemble, since fighting out the battle with the queen, now that the victory was on her side, was out of the question. He therefore clad his countenance in forced smiles, and thanked the king in form for the *favour* he had conferred on him.

The queen, in order to divert her mind from her recent loss and from political disagreeables, undertook to get up private theatricals, like several other of the court coteries. The greatest secrecy was observed in selecting the company. The actresses were the queen, Madame Elizabeth, the Countess d'Artois, Mesdames Jules and Diane de Polignac, Mesdames de Polastron, d'Andlau, De Châlons, and several others. The actors were the Counts D'Adhémar, De Vaudreuil, De Coigny, De Dillon, de Bezenval, and the Count d'Artois, who, though a bad performer,

always aspired to appropriate the most effective parts. Clairval and D'Azincourt were appointed prompters, and Campan, the queen's private secretary, manager.

Will it be credited, that the Duke de Fronsac, first gentleman of the bed-chamber, took it into his head to contest the latter's post? Disliked by the whole world, it would seem as if he aspired to multiply his retaliations by countermining every individual in return. He complained to the queen that the post belonged by etiquette to him.

The queen only laughed. "Do you think," said she, "your official station is to hold me in fetters, even when I perform in a private play?"

"Heaven forbid, madame."

"Well, then, your privileges ought to cease as soon as it pleases me to divest myself of my rank. At Petit-Trianon I am a private individual, and court etiquette must remain at the door till I re-assume it on my return."

The duke, however, was not satisfied with this rebuff, and proceeded so far with the nuisance of his complaints, as to render his own situation disagreeable and oblige him to resign.

The queen eagerly wanted to enrol the Countess de Provence in her corps; but I had persuaded her to maintain her dignity by keeping aloof. The Countess d'Artois had at first promised to act like her sister; but was at last prevailed on to break her determination. This encouraged the queen to hope the same of the Countess de Provence: and one day that I was at Brunoy, she and the Countess d'Artois came there to lecture her conjointly into their views. But the countess remained firm in her resolution. At length the queen, piqued, said in a haughty tone, "One would think, madam, that you might, with strict propriety, share an amusement in which the queen of France takes part."

"Certainly, madame," briskly replied the

countess, "when the queen gives good examples, a princess need not refuse to follow them; but on this occasion permit me to decline imitating the example of your majesty."

This reply was followed by still more bitter rejoinders: the parties proceeded to discuss the relative pre-eminence of the houses of Lorraine and Savoy; and the queen, in the warmth of the discussion, pretended that her family was as ancient as the Bourbons.

At this the Count d'Artois, who till then had said nothing, forgot the object of his mission in his family zeal, and affecting a jocose tone, remarked, "I thought you were speaking seriously till now, madame; but I now perceive that the whole conversation has been a joke."

This remark quite disconcerted the queen, who made no attempt to prolong the conversation. The two sisters-in-law sulked with each other for some time afterwards, but we

finally succeeded in reconciling them; and the houses of Lorraine and Savoy embraced, through the good mediation of the house of France.

This little *scena* did not discourage the queen's inclinations. The plays were performed for some time to the "desert air," with closed doors, and with audiences consisting of five or six of the royal family, and an equal number of strangers. But as custom brings confidence, and as a play is nothing without an audience, the princesses' women were first persuaded to fill the empty benches, and subsequently the Gardes de Corps were put in requisition to applaud the august company, while the Swiss Guard did their duty without. The queen, on the first occasion of their visit, condescended to say to these gentlemen as soon as the performance was over, that she should have been happy to exhibit more talent as an actress, in order to give them more gratification.

The shouts of bravo and applause which followed may be conceived.

I meanwhile privately deplored these levities, which ill corresponded with our situation. The king sometimes discouraged them: and at other times encouraged them by his presence and apparent amusement. One evening, that he recalled to mind the Count d'Artois' hiss of his dancing exhibition, when Dauphin, he resolved to pay him off in the same coin, while he was striving might and main to give effect to a difficult part. The next day a report was spread in Versailles that his majesty had hissed the queen, who had fainted away with mortification.

It must be frankly avowed, that if this unfortunate princess became unpopular, it was the upper class of nobility to whom she was indebted for the result. Envy inspired the first detractions; libels followed; and they drew down on her head the disasters in which the king was himself finally involved.

The house of Condé, at this epoch, greatly scandalized the public by the final separation between the Duke de Bourbon and his wife. During a visit to Chantilly, the duke wrote to the duchess that he and his father dispensed with her coming to join them. There was nothing equivocal in this intimation, and the prince's conduct gave sufficient confirmation to his intentions. Meanwhile an actress, Made-moiselle Michelot, his avowed mistress, being delivered of a boy, he not only caused him to be registered as his son, but induced his sister, the Princess de Condé, contrary to her inclinations, to be his godmother.

This was a complication of injuries on the husband's side. He however hoped to extenuate appearances by writing a justificatory letter to the king, in which he painted the duchess's conduct in the most odious colours.

We were all indignant at this letter. Louis XVI. expressed his dissatisfaction, and tried

to recal the prince to better feelings; but the separation was notwithstanding effected. The duke returned her marriage dowry to his wife, notwithstanding the opposition of the Duke d'Orleans, who wished to prevent matters from being carried to such an extremity of pecuniary sacrifice.

It was impossible not to be greatly chagrined at the exhibition of such a scandal in a family which ought to have given better examples. From that moment we alighted the Prince de Condé, who never appeared at court except on great occasions. This alienation lasted up to the revolution when necessity brought us together, although perhaps there was no excess of mutual goodwill amongst us.

The victory of Necker over Sartines was destined to be of short duration. The former, puffed up with self-conceit, in the hopes of making his service indispensable, resorted to a stimulated popularity in order to gain that

object. To this effect he, contrary to all previous usage, published his famous *Compte Rendu* to the king, which the wits characterized as the *Comte Bleu*, because this printed report had a cover of that colour. This was an appeal to the tribunal of the public: no finance minister had ever before submitted the budget to such an authority. This conduct exasperated the court, while it gratified the rest of the nation: it in fact produced an electrifying stir. The enemies of Necker (and he had more enemies than friends) denounced him as a traitor, and demanded his punishment; but approbation was too loud and universal; his friends were too numerous, and his adversaries were compelled to postpone their projects of retaliation.

The king himself was not offended by the measure: and he replied to the Count d'Artois, when the latter was complaining of Necker, "It is, at all events, a proof that he does not

rob the treasury, and one cannot visit an indiscretion as a crime."

Contrary to his usual practice, he however consulted me on the subject.

"Sire," said I, "M. Necker's conduct is of itself innocent enough; but it may be productive of fatal consequences. It will accustom the public to discuss matters which should be kept in the back-ground: and whatever may be the good intentions of the finance minister, for which I am willing to give him credit, I cannot but think he has struck a fatal blow to royal authority."

"This is looking at things on the dark side," rejoined the king. "For my part I see an advantage in the step. Publishing the expenditure of the budget will necessarily lead to reform; and pillagers of the public purse will be more cautious when they know that their rapacity will be exposed to public observation."

“ But why, sire, suffer them to pillage it?”

“ Why? If you were in my place you would not ask the question.”

Alas! the king was in the right.

CHAPTER XVI.

M. Necker's budget—The rising storm—His partizans at court, male and female—The indecision of the Queen—Her remarks on the Conte Bleu—Necker aims at impossibilities—Joke on his vanity by the Count de Provence—It increases the number of his enemies—Details of the last days of his first ministry—The Queen favourably receives him—Comte de Maurepas hoaxes him—The departure of Necker, and the manner in which he vents his anger—The joy of the Courtiers—The grief of the People—M. Joly de Fleury made Comptroller-General of the Finances—The Duke de Chartres and the Public—The Marquis d'Argenson an innkeeper and postmaster—Mesdames de Lordat and d'Ossun—Birth of the Dauphin—The Baron de Breteuil resigns his embassy to Vienna—The Count de Grasse—His nephew is calumniated—Severe expressions of the King to the latter.

I SHALL not enter into the details of M. Necker's report on the budget. He drew it up in such a

form as to redound entirely in his own favour ; he exhibited therein all the abuses which had existed previous to his accession to the ministry, all those which he had since remedied, and the future improvements he proposed. This great work, the object of which was more to serve the financier himself than the state, did not impose on me, and the remark I made to the king upon it, turned out subsequently too palpably true. The report provoked a perfect tempest of pamphlets ; it caused the first fermentation of public opinion, the consequences of which led to the convocation of the States General. A violent contest resulted between the public accountants and Necker's partizans ; a habit was produced of censuring the acts of authority ; and the evil soon became irreparable.

The court especially took part against Necker, with a zeal produced by his economical reforms. To this faction were united all those who aspired to his vacant place ; the Arch-

bishop de Toulouse, Calonne, two or three other ambitious individuals, all the great officers of the king's household, the friends of Taboureaux, of Sartines, and the princes of the blood, in short, all those whom a feeling of self-defence united in a common cause. Necker, however, was not entirely abandoned to his own resources; he had in his favour the encyclopedists, all the partizans of the new ideas, and several courtiers to whom he had promised places, or who permitted themselves to be seduced by the pretended sincerity of his calculations. At their head was the Duke de Choiseul, who could never bring himself to renounce his hopes of re-acquiring his former influence; next, the Duke de Châtelet, who wanted to be secretary at war; the Prince de Beauvau, who had a mania for a seat in the council; the Comte de Tessé, who thirsted for an occasion to testify his detestation of the Polignacs; all the Noailles, by virtue of the

suppression of places of which they pretended to be the victims ; and finally, the Rohans, who feeling their false position, caught at the first straw in order to improve it. A great number of females also declared in favour of Necker ; for instance, the Princess de Beauvau, whose enlarged views he pretended to admire ; Madame de Montesson, who wanted to pass for a wit ; Madame de Hénin, for want of something to do ; Madame de Grammont, from the natural interest she felt in her brother ; Mesdames de Blot, de Simiane, de Coigny, de Tessé, and a crowd of others, because they wanted notoriety at any cost. All these allies composed a formidable faction, which counterbalanced the influence of the opposite party.

The queen fluctuated between the two ; she entertained a kind of antipathy to Necker ; which, in fact, was the mere instinct of an amiable woman averse to the tyranny of a pedant,—the instinct of a queen repulsive of an arrogant

plébeian. She never spoke of Necker without irony; she took pleasure in ridiculing his prim banking habits, the frigid punctilio of his Calvinistic dogmatism, the pedantry of his wife, which was fully equal to his own, and the assumption of his daughter, which already began to be annoying, notwithstanding her youth. On the other hand, the queen was afraid of displeasing the king, by taking a too decided part against Necker, and thereby hastening his fall, and consequently the preponderance of Count de Maurepas, whom she feared still more than she did Necker. This indecision caused strange oscillations in her conduct, sometimes leading her into the enemy's camp, and sometimes embarking her among the hostile forces. Necker's partizans made a great noise about a remark she made on the report of the budget. Some of the courtiers were reading it in the great salon at Marly, at the moment her majesty was entering. They were anxious to remove it,

but they were not quick enough to escape her notice. The queen asked what they were concealing, and they made some excuse in reply. "Don't trouble yourselves, gentlemen," said she, "I see no impropriety in your reading the work; it is the production of a man who is zealous for the king's service, and who wishes well to the country." This approbation ought to have triumphantly defended M. Necker against his assailants; but the queen's expressions had no weight, for she at that time had no other will but Madame de Polignac's. So true indeed was this, that shortly after reports were spread of the approaching fall of Necker, which soon became so public, that he was obliged to give in his resignation. The following was the manner in which the occurrence took place.

I have already stated that Necker, fully persuaded that he could not be done without, pertinaciously followed the line of conduct he had

chalked out, neither turning to the right nor to the left. No obstacles arrested his march ; they only made him more determined ; yielding was out of the question. However, bewildered at last with continued recriminations and calumnies, Necker persuaded himself that the best way to crush his enemies, and to silence them for ever, was to strike a *grand coup*, and to place himself at such a point of elevation as to be ever after beyond their reach. He consequently presented a memorial to the king, in which he demanded a seat at the council-table, alleging that his presence there was indispensable, for the purpose of explaining his measures of finance ; he moreover urged the necessity of taking some rigorous steps to put down the resistance of the parliament, to punish several intendants who had dared to oppose him, and among others the intendant of Moulins, the sieur Gueau de Reverseaux. He further urged the necessity of convoking a bed of

justice, in order to get his edict for the creation of provincial administrations registered ; and in conclusion demanded a titular recompense, the éclat of which might prove the unlimited confidence of his majesty. M. Necker had publicly hinted, that in default of a blue ribband, which his situation as a Protestant would not permit him to accept, he should have no objection to be satisfied with the title of duke. I am bound to confess, in whatever way the admission may militate against me, that of all his demands, the last filled me with the greatest indignation. The king thought there was nothing improper in the comptroller general coming to the council, in order to sustain and support his own measures, and in the new system being at least tried in some of the provinces ; but notwithstanding his usual good feeling, he could not entertain the idea of a man without family pretending to the highest dignity of the state. This pretension indeed furnished

the queen and us with an inexhaustible fund of amusing remark. M. *le Duke Necker*, Chevalier de l'Ordre, supplied a source of capital quiz, as well as *Mademoiselle Culchaut*, the financier's wife, occupying a seat upon the tabouret in the midst of all the grandes of the court.

The Duchess de Polignac, who felt very little flattered by such a society, and the Countess de Maurepas, who had been dying with anxiety to obtain the privilege of the tabouret, moved heaven and earth, the one with the queen, the other with her husband, against M. Necker's project. The Count d'Artois also interposed; and, I must confess I put in my word, not foreseeing at that time what necessity would subsequently make me submit to. This general concurrence of opinion finally decided the king not to grant the titular recompence, but to accept the proffered resignation of M. Necker, in case of its refusal. The financier's memoir was

handed in on Tuesday, the 15th of May; he at the same time acquainted the king that he had no other calculations at present to submit to him, and that he should not commence any new ones till he had received his answer. Louis XVI. took the memorial, and put it into his pocket, without saying a word. The next day, the 16th, Necker had a glimpse of hope; he understood that the king had no objection to his presence at the council-table; but the 17th produced no confirmation of this intelligence. He rubbed patiently through the 18th, and on the 19th, when he arrived at Marly, to take his part in the Friday's council, he learned that the king had gone on a hunting excursion. Astonished that he should have had no intimation of this, he hastened to Count de Maurepas, who could not receive him, in consequence of an attack of the gout. This was a mere pretext of the mentor, in order to avoid troublesome inquiries, which he might not have found it

convenient to answer. This evasion appeared a bad omen to Necker, who began to think he had pushed his demands too far, and to recall the proverb, "Large grasp small hold." Scarcely knowing what tools he had left to work with, he then went to the queen's apartment, quite uncertain of being received; Marie-Antoinette however received him with her accustomed condescension. Rather encouraged by this, Necker did not hesitate to complain of the uncertainty in which he was suffered to remain; an uncertainty which, as he said, injured the public business; and, he added, that if his services were considered no longer necessary, it was better to inform him so at once.

The queen, with the natural delicacy of a refined mind in withholding unpleasant intelligence, pretended to know nothing about it, and expressed her assurance that the king only delayed his reply in order to give the subject more deliberation. Her majesty con-

cluded by requesting M. Necker to return the next day, and apply to M. de Maurepas. The queen told us in the evening how much she suffered, in being obliged to leave Necker in his uncertainty; he seemed so cast down by his situation, that his very self-respect had abandoned him; in short, the philosopher supported his fall with little philosophy. Parties were *already* formed to find a substitute for him; the queen and the Count d'Artois supported M. de Calonne, whom M. de Maurepas opposed with all his influence; the Duchess de Polignac and the Abbé de Vermont put forward the Archbishop of Toulouse, to whom the king had no present inclination. Indeed, it would have been bad policy to offer violence to the king's inclinations, at a time when he was about to sacrifice a man whom he thought necessary. It was, therefore, deemed expedient to leave the appointment to the absolute discretion of M. de Maurepas.

On Saturday the 20th of May, M. Necker

proceeded to the latter, who in the most polite terms communicated his dismissal. He assured him that his majesty entertained a sincere sense of gratitude for the good order his exertions had established in the finance department; that he intended shortly to give him substantial proofs of it; but in the mean while it would be deemed proper for him to give up his official residence and retire to his country-seat at Sainte Ouen, in order to recover his health, which the excessive fatigues of business must have contributed to derange. The premier might have protracted this address, in which truth and hoaxing were diplomatically combined, without any interruption from M. Necker. He was thunderstruck by the sudden subversion of all his hopes, and by the thoughts of returning to his private station without any acquired distinction. He had the mortification to see himself obviously cajoled by a worn-out courtier, to whom he considered himself greatly superior, and deserted by the king at the very

moment when he thought he had every thing his own way. All this was enough to bewilder him. He made a vain effort to disguise the internal conflict of his wounded self-love and his discretion : but M. de Maurepas saw every thing that was passing in his mind. The ex-minister stammered out a few words of course, and then hastened to relate his misfortune to the Marechal de Castries, one of his admirers. His rage being no longer under restraint now burst forth with violence, and M. de Castries has since informed me of the expressions which he suffered to escape him. "They have got rid of me for the present," said he bitterly, "but it will not be for long : they will be obliged to recall me ; and when I return, I shall dispose of matters in such a way as not to be easily dismissed, if the caprice of dismissing me should again occur to their minds."

Great was the joy at court, when it was understood that the untractable finance minister could no longer pare the spendthrift's nails.

It was a perfect period of festival. The Count de d'Artois was in ecstasies ; and rejoicings were the order of the day. You would have taken the courtiers for a family of prodigal heirs, at the moment of signing the order for the interment of a wealthy and miserly relation. For myself, I did not dissemble my satisfaction ; the king alone appeared sad and dispirited. He had yielded to the impulse of the moment in dismissing Necker ; and he now asked himself if matters would go on better after his removal. Time alone could resolve the question.

But if Versailles was pleased, I am bound by truth as a prince and historian to say, that the fall of Necker occasioned a universal dissatisfaction in Paris ; that his partizans scattered the torches of discontent on every side ; and that the regret and applause which followed his retreat inflicted a cruel wound on us which it was difficult to heal. At Saint Ouen Necker received tributes of respect which no prince of the

royal family had ever received. In short, the entire public opinion of the kingdom pronounced in favour of the vanquished against the victor so decidedly, as to render the victory abortive.

This infatuation of the populace grieved the king deeply; the queen was cut to the heart, and the Polignacs exasperated to the utmost. They could have wished for a Bastille large enough to have contained all the refractory populace within its walls.

Unhappily, as generally happens on such occasions, a man was thrust forward in Necker's room, who knew nothing about financial affairs— Joly de Fleury, a name of so little note, that all the biographers have passed it over in their compilations. M. de Maurepas dug him out from the midst of useless researches which amounted to a nullity. In other respects, he was mild, polite, and obliging; but these qualities were insufficient to direct the deranged finances of a great kingdom.

The courtiers liked him at first, because they took him for the yielding willow in the fable.

He remained in office as long as his protector lived ; but as soon as he lost that support, he returned unperceived into his native obscurity, where he at least carried with him the consolatory consciousness of irreproachable conduct.

About this time arose the disputes between the Duke de Chartres and the proprietors of the adjacent houses of the Palais Royal. He had already adopted the design of rebuilding that edifice, which is not yet finished ;* but the public perceiving that its design deprived them of an agreeable promenade, made common part with the refractory proprietors, and showered on the duke a multitude of caricatures and pamphlets which covered him with ridicule. However, he did nothing but exert his right ; but it is not enough for elevated rank to be in the right ; it should have tact enough to avoid all degrading collision with the people. A trading prince can never be popular. To convert a palace into shops, is a speculation not very

* The present king has finished it.—EDITOR.

worthy of a royal highness; it is a blot on a prince's escutcheon.

Among those who were marked out to the duke as his opponents, was the Marquis d'Argenson. Determined to be revenged, the prince found means to apprise the king, that the marquis though possessed of an immense fortune, was a horse dealer, and kept, under another name, a posting inn on his estate at Ormes. Louis XVI. reproached him when he next appeared at court, for suffering his avarice to induce him to stain his rank by so mean a trade. This family, which was of importance, had considerably fallen in former court favour, and entertained a consequent rancour against the royal family; so much so, as to be constantly opposed to it during the revolution. I might say the same of the Marquis de Chauvelier, who owed so much to our family, and whose ingratitude was so flagrant. As to M. de Lafayette, I have nothing to say against him; he has never deviated

from the line of conduct he first adopted, and was always the same from the time of the war in America, where he went in search of contraband distinction. My unhappy brother, in the last moments of his life, did him full justice. I may have to make a revelation of some facts in the course of this work very indistinctly known on this head.

The queen was again *enceinte*. We were informed of it as news, although we had been some time aware of it. I could not help saying so to the king when he communicated the intelligence to me; and he expressed himself in such a manner as to convince me, that he had nothing to do with the slight. I need not say, that I was gratified by this expected increase of the royal family: but I was piqued by the prying air of the courtiers, who were pleased to detect discontent in my looks and my most trifling actions. The queen made no disguise of her triumph to me as well as the Countess de Provence. No

doubt she meant it as a little retaliation on my wife, because she had declined to take a part in the theatrical performance.

The joy throughout France was great, on it being known that the queen was about to give birth to a heir. From that epoch, she multiplied the number of her dependants about the king, who increased the influence she already exerted over his mind. The Baron de Breteuil, ambassador to Vienna, and whom my sister-in-law supported above all and against all, being at Paris this year on leave of absence, was appointed a councillor of state, and took his seat at the council table on the 18th June. This was paving the way to his future post of minister. The baron, who was devoted to the queen, was destined, however, to be her prompter in the most fatal of the errors she committed. He subsequently crossed my path during my emigration, for he had the presumption to set himself up as my rival in power.

The Count de Grasse, who commanded one of our fleets, had made himself master of Tabago, and sent his nephew to present the flags taken on this occasion to the king. An unfortunate misunderstanding gave occasion to the latter dropping an expression, which I should have wished to have passed over, had it not been so well known ; but I hope to be able to mitigate its darker shade by relating the circumstances which led to it.

The court is not a place for following that sacred precept of the evangelist, which commands us to love our neighbours as ourselves. Every body there, on the contrary, constantly maligns his neighbour to such a degree, that detraction would appear to be one of a courtier's necessary duties. In consequence of this laudable principle, one of the vice-admiral's relations, who had incurred the dislike or envy of some of the emissaries of slander, had been represented in such black colours to the king, that he had con-

ceived a violent antipathy to him without knowing him. On the announcement of the vice-admiral's nephew with the glorious spoils of victory at Tabago, M. de Castries, with the best intentions to the young man, spoke of his relationship to the Count de Grasse. Louis XVI. mistook the name, and thinking it to be the same individual against whom he had been so prejudiced, resolved to give him a reception correspondent with his dislike. Accordingly, at the very moment when the shattered flags were presented to him, instead of making some gracious reply to the vice-admiral's envoy, his majesty, throwing a look of contempt on the glorious spoils of victory, abruptly asked him, "What are those rags you have there?"

The consternation of the naval officer, and the surprise of the bye-standers at this startling inquiry, may be readily conceived. As for me, I was perfectly dumbfounded. However, sus-

pecting that there was something under the cards in the affair, I made inquiries, and learnt what I have detailed.

CHAPTER XIV.

New details of the birth of the Dauphin—The King's joy—His conversation with the Count de Provence—The Queen and the Princess de Guemené—Mysterious warning—Its disappearance—The King at Paris—What he said to the Count d'Artois—Fatal omen—Clever bon-mot of the Count d'Artois to the Duke d'Angoulême—Second childhood of the Mentor—His death—Position of the Queen—How the King was imposed on—Intrigues to replace the defunct minister—Madame Victoire supports M. de Machault—Madame Adelaide recommends the Cardinal de Bernis—The Count de Provence prevents the King's acceptance of the latter.

THE embarrassment of the finances did not cease: the dismissal of Necker, far from producing any good, added still more to the drain on

the treasury, for public credit disappeared with that public confidence which the ex-minister had the skill to acquire. His successor could discover no means of remedying the evil, which consequently went on continually augmenting. However, flattering chimeras of improvement were indulged, which only rendered the termination of the dream more terrible. As for me, I had the misfortune to be never soothed by a belief in these delusions.

The moment of the queen's *accouchement* approached, and on the 22nd of October 1781, at twenty-three minutes past one in the afternoon, she was safely delivered. The new-born scion of royalty was, according to etiquette, transferred to M. de Miroménil, the keeper of the seals, in order to ascertain its sex. During this ceremony every one was silent, holding his breath in anxiety, to hear what sex would be proclaimed. That of the king and queen were at their height. I must confess that my heart

beat violently, and I believe the Count d'Artois was not less affected. Indeed it was no wonder, for the question to be decided would exert great influence over the future destiny of us all. Suddenly joy appeared on the countenance of the keeper of the seals; he cast an elated glance on the king, who watched his slightest gesture; the king's countenance caught the exulting expression, and I quickly understood the cause. I instantly adapted my physiognomy to the event; but the Count d'Artois, to whom I communicated my suspicions, violently trembled.

The queen alone remained in the torments of suspense. The king consulted the accoucheur in a low voice, who replied with his usual frank abruptness—"Sire—joy never kills."

This assertion having re-assured Louis XVI., he approached the queen, and said, "Madam, you have gratified my wishes and those of France. You are mother of a Dauphin."

Vermont was right: no one dies of joy. The queen immediately forgot all her sufferings, desired her son to be brought to her, and melting into tears, kissed him over and over again, in a mingled transport of pride and love.

The king was inebriated with joy. He walked out of one room into the other, talked to every one he met, and would have shared his joy with the whole world.

"Brothers," said he, "turning to us, "I hope that, as brothers as well as princes, you are as happy as I am at this increase of the royal family."

There is something so communicative in the expression of happiness, that I felt I could sincerely reply, that I fully sympathized with his joy, and my tears attested it.

The Count d'Artois also exhibited some marks of emotion. The king then closely embraced us, and said to us with affecting goodness of heart, "Be assured that I shall do

my utmost in future to show my sense of your disinterestedness."

The Dauphin was baptized the same day, and I had the honour of standing godfather: the queen, in re-consigning him to Madame Gueméné, said, "I need not, madame, recommend to your care this precious deposit, in which the entire kingdom is interested: it cannot be consigned to better hands; but I hope to be able to lighten your toils in sharing those which you will have to devote to my daughter."

These words did not fall agreeably on the ear of the princess, who understood from them that the queen meditated confiding the education of her daughter to another, under pretence of taking the duty on herself. In fact, the queen was not ignorant how very unfit the governess was for her important functions. Of giddy habits, full of levity, uninformed, and unrespected, she only owed her importance to her name and function.

The same evening I found a letter on my

night-table, sedulously wrapped in a double envelope, and superscribed with the following address:—"For MONSIEUR only."

I could not imagine how it came there, and all the individuals of my suite protested ignorance. I made a sign to d'Avaray, who was near me, to open the first envelope. A second then appeared with the same address. My curiosity was now excited. I determined to open this myself, and by a singular presentiment, I turned towards the bed, in order that the bystanders might not see what was inside the packet. As soon as I had opened it, I perceived a sheet of black paper with writing in white ink. I was seized with an emotion indefinable to myself. However, I resolved to suppress it, and consigning the letter to its envelope, I retired to bed, and dismissed my attendants.

As soon as I was alone, I yielded to my impatience, opened the mysterious letter, and read the following words by the light of my night lamp.

“ Console-toi ; je viens de tirer l’horoscope du nouveau-né ; il ne t’enlèvera pas la couronne ; il cessera de vivre lorsque son père cessera de régner. Un autre que toi, cependant, succédera à Louis XVI ; mais tu ne seras pas moins roi de France un jour. Malheur à celui qui te remplacera !—Félicite-toi d’être sans postérité, l’existence de tes fils serait menacée de trop grands maux ; car ta famille boira jusqu’à la lie ce que la coupe du Destin renferme de plus amer.

“ Adieu ! tremble pour ta vie, si tu cherches à me connaître ! Je suis—

“ LA MORT !!! ”

“ Be of good cheer ! I have just drawn the horoscope of the new-born prince ; he is not destined to deprive you of the crown. He will terminate his life with the termination of his father’s reign. Nevertheless, Louis XVI. will not be succeeded by you, but by another. Yet shall you be one day king of France. Woe to

your successor ! Rejoice that you have no children : the greatest calamities would menace their existence : for, be assured, your family are doomed to drink the bitterest dregs of the cup of fate.

“ Farewell ! Tremble for your life, if you seek to detect me. I am

“ DEATH.”

Confounded, and may I say dismayed, at the perusal of this mystic scroll, I could not go to sleep, and began reflecting what I ought to do. Should I preserve silence, or divulge the matter to M. de Maurepas or the lieutenant of police ? The menaces of the letter did not intimidate me personally ; I felt that they could not affect me. But I was disturbed, in spite of myself, at sinister predictions, made with so much audacity. I feared, moreover, that this mysterious warning might be a trap of my enemies. Wearied with thinking, and incapable of sleeping, I quietly rose from bed and wrote a copy

of the letter, in case I might be compelled to give up the original, and as it was short, the task was soon completed.

But what was my surprise, when as I fixed my glance on the characters, which were written in white ink, I perceived that they had a sort of motion as if the ink was in the act of effervescing ! I now more earnestly examined them ; the vacillation of the characters augmented, and in a short space of time, the whole disappeared. I was aware, from this circumstance, that a chemical composition had been employed for the mysterious letters, which would be absorbed into the paper after a limited time. I examined the curious experiment closely. The words first became paler, then yellow, and then gradually vanished, leaving nothing but a few spots on the paper. The scientific precaution of the crafty author of this work of darkness, gave me deep mortification : there were no more proofs against him, when the

corpus delicti had itself vanished. The calculation was in fact still more long-sighted; for the next morning, the paper was found worn in holes, crumpled, and in short, in a state of deterioration, which attested the action of some corrosive liquid, which being suspended for a time by its co-agents, subsequently resumed its destructive efficacy.

This result determined me to make no mention of the occurrence. I perceived that the author, if he had a design to mystify me, had at least no intention to injure me; for his precautions discovered his fear of being himself compromised. I therefore imitated his prudence and was silent; nor ever mentioned the occurrence till after my emigration, and to d'Avaray alone. I rose the next day unrefreshed by repose, and for several days after could not help interrogating the countenances of all who approached me, in order to detect the culprit; but he entirely escaped my penetration.

On the 29th I and the Count d'Artois accompanied the entrance of the king into Paris, to render public thanks for the birth of the Dauphin. The procession was received with unusual acclamations; my name was pronounced here and there; but no lip uttered that of the Count d'Artois. The king having remarked this to the latter, he pettishly replied, "The reason is, the people are more accustomed to see me than your majesty. It would seem that the only way to make favours properly appreciated, is to be chary of bestowing them."

"It is at least certain," replied the king, "that in order to be respected, it will not do to be too prodigal of your company."

"But as for me, sire, I prefer a daily moderate pleasure to the opportunity of gratifying one's pride twice or thrice a year in a more exciting manner."

The public address here opportunely put a stop to the conversation, which had already pro-

ceeded too far. A world of brilliant fêtes followed; we had a procession of the trades at Versailles; and on this occasion, there occurred what seemed to me a melancholy augury—the march of the sextons with the implements of their lugubrious profession. However, an opportunity was taken to prevent their defiling before the queen.

I ought not here to forget a brilliant *mot* of the Count d'Artois on the occasion of taking his eldest son to see the Dauphin on the day of his birth. On quitting the apartments, the Duke d'Angoulême said with the *naïveté* of his age; “Dear me, papa, how *little* my cousin is!”

“Yes, child,” replied the count, “but the time will come when you find him sufficiently *great*.”

The Count d'Artois little foresaw, at that time, that the *Duke d'Angoulême was destined

* Louis XVIII was in this curious prediction equally unprophectic as his brother.—EDITOR.

to ascend that very throne from which the Dauphin seemed to remove his chance for ever. While thus the royal family was giving symptoms of its perpetuation, M. de Maurepas was approaching the end of his long career ; his mental powers, as well as his bodily, were growing impaired ; but he had always displayed so much levity, that his second childhood was not so readily perceived. I was the first to remark it, and particularly on the 6th and 7th of November. I went up to his chamber to thank him for the entrée to the royal apartment, which he had granted to d'Avaray, when he suddenly interrupted me, by saying, " I could do no less for a descendant of King Clovis."

" No doubt you consider him a relation of Montesquiou," I replied, laughing ; for I thought the mentor intended to be facetious, but he replied with perfect gravity, " The d'Avarays are of the royal race. The late king Henry IV. repeatedly assured me of

this; they are, moreover, allied to the Queen of Sheba. I may impart this secret to you, because I know you are attached to them."

The steadfastness of the count's eyes, while he spoke, explained to me the whole mystery of these incoherent expressions. I waited a little, and then addressing other questions to him, I received answers sufficiently judicious to prove that the mental alienation he had thus exhibited, was only a transitory occurrence. I related to nobody what had passed. From that day, the mentor's health rapidly declined; and he died on the 21st of November, at eleven at night:

While his family were still occupied with his funeral, strange cabals were set on foot to occupy his post.

Some persons wanted to put forward the Count d'Ossun, a person of small reputation, and capacity equally small; with just so much merit as to give no invidious umbrage to any body else. Hestood high with the court of Spain,

but low in every other estimation. His wife was an intimate of the Polignacs, but their favour for her did not extend sufficiently far to raise her husband to a post of so great predominance.

The Count de Vergennes, who was more fit for a subordinate post than that of prime minister, had also his party. This court Pharos, whose vague light was however sufficient to make him conspicuous amidst the darkness of a court atmosphere, was not unfavourably viewed by the queen, and almost loved by the king. He made no parade of pride or ambition ; he was known to have gratitude ; much was to be hoped from *that* ; and these reasons encouraged his friends to labour for his promotion. Next came M. de Machault, already described as the protégé of our aunt Victoire ; but Louis XVI. on this occasion told her “ that he had now more confidence in his own resources than his family was willing to assign to

him ; and after losing M. de Maurepas, he should not resolve on taking a guide till he had ascertained from experience that he stood in need of lessons in the art of governing. This reply closed Madame Victoire's lips, and no more was heard of M. de Machault.

There remained the Cardinal de Bernis, supported by Madame Adelaide, who exerted a real influence over the king's mind ; and I do not know whether he might not have succeeded, if I had not involuntarily interfered with the affair. It happened in this way :

The king, without consulting me on important matters of fact, often asked my opinion of particular individuals. He knew that I saw much of the world, that I read all the new pamphlets, and that consequently I ought to be well-informed of a multitude of things of which he was ignorant.

We were walking alone in the gallery at Brunoy, towards the end of November, when

Louis XVI. suddenly stopped, and looking at me intently, asked, "What does the world say of Cardinal de Bernis?"

I immediately perceived the drift of the question and the appropriate answer. "Sire," said I, "the world thinks M. de Bernis much better disposed of at Rome than he would be in the ministry. The Marchioness de Pompadour was not a good selector of a president for the council-table."

"He was then a friend of that ——"

His majesty never qualified his terms when speaking of Cotillon I. or Cotillon II.

"Who doubts it, sire?" I replied.

"That is a pretty mode of arriving at the cardinal's purple."

"It is the most easy."

The king laughed heartily at this response, I know not why.

"But what's your private opinion," said he, "of the cardinal?"

“ The same as that which Voltaire and the king of Prussia always entertained. The last, all his life, made him his butt behind his back, while flattering him to his face ; and the first is still laughing at the expense of *Babet the shop-keeper*, for so he nicknames him.”

“ Madame Adelaide says he is endowed with talent.”

“ He has shown it by making a most unfavourable treaty for our family. He cannot help being imbued by this time with the politics of the court of Rome, and those are not the proper politics for conducting this most Christian kingdom.”

“ This matter is too serious for joking with,” replied the king ; “ I, however, have not thought seriously of employing the cardinal, whose information never inspired me with much confidence.”

From that moment there was an end of the cause of M. de Bernis.

CHAPTER XVI.

Intrigues of the Abbé de Vermont—The Queen refuses her support to the Archbishop of Toulouse—Becomes all-influential—Madame Sophia—Hoax played off on her by the Count de Provence—The Archbishop of Toulouse is created sole Commander of the Order du Roi—Madame de Genlis, Governess to the children of the Duke de Chartres—The Grand Duke Paul of Russia at Paris—Return of Joseph II.—The Count d'Artois serves at Gibraltar with the Duke de Bourbon—Death of the Duchess de Phalaris—Count Louis de Narbonne—The Prince and Princess de Guéméné—Their Bankruptcy—They lose their Posts—Intrigues to obtain them—Quarrel of the Queen with Madame de Polignac—Insatiable rapacity of the Polignacs.

AFTER all these competitors, came the Archbishop of Toulouse, supported by a single individual, but who was worth the whole court

besides—the Abbé de Vermont. The latter, by maintaining himself in a perfect isolation, had preserved all his credit, and all his influence over the mind of the queen, unimpaired. He detested Madame de Polignac; successfully counterworked her proceedings; and the favourite, on her side, returning him dislike for dislike, attacked him without being able to injure him; in so steady an equilibrium did the queen hold the scales which balanced their opposing influences. It was a phenomenon which I never could explain.

The queen had no great liking to the Archbishop of Toulouse; but her confidence in the Abbé disposed her to accept him when she found him so warmly recommended. He might in fact have succeeded, if a word she dropped to Madame de Polignac had not called the latter into the field, and excited her dismay at seeing a successor to M. de Maurepas appointed, without her interference. In order to parry

so fatal a stroke, the favourite, in co-operation with MM. de Vaudreuil, D'Adhemar, De Coigny, and De Bezenval, strained every nerve to destroy the work of the Abbé de Vermont, and they played off their machinery so well as to gain their point, and disappoint the archbishop's almost realized hopes.

While M. de Maurepas had no successor, the queen inherited all his influence and the entire direction of affairs. Every thing was done by her management, and the crown fell to the lot of the distaff, in defiance of the Salic law. I believe the queen had good intentions, and have no reason to accuse her of any open partiality to her countrymen of Lorraine; but she was too much given to pleasure to be able to canvass important political questions; committing their direction mostly to those who possessed her confidence,—and thence flowed all our calamities.

We lost at this period our aunt the Princess

Sophia; she died in the night between the 2nd and 3rd of March. The Princess was ugly and ill-shaped, and she had a disagreeable cast of the eye; at the same time impressed with a high idea of what was due to her rank, she was ultra punctilious in point of etiquette; but the good princess was so alarmed at thunder, that she forgot all the dignity of etiquette at the slightest murmur of a thunder-storm. Whenever I wished to play off a trick on her, I pretended that there was a thunder-storm coming on, and the mention of it was sure to give her an attack of the nerves.

One day that Madame Sophia was on a visit to the Countess d'Artois, the latter, who wished to go to the opera, not knowing how to get my aunt away, I gave a hint to Modène to go up stairs into the apartment overhead, and to roll a large round log of wood over the floor. The hoax succeeded *à merveille*. Madame Sophia, imagining the sound to be that of thunder,

hurried away *instantly*, in order to shut herself up in her own apartment, and that in spite of the most pressing solicitations affectingly employed to induce her to stay. We had a hearty laugh at our success directly her back was turned.

To make M. de Brienne amends for the loss of the ministry, the queen obtained for him the post of sole commander of the Order *du Roi*; a promotion neither justified by his birth nor merits, and which, while it surprised, gave presage of augmented future favour.

At the beginning of this year the Duke de Chartres appointed the Countess de Genlis governess of his children. This novel appointment gave birth to some sarcasm on petticoat government, such posts having been previously considered the exclusive province of men. However, I am bound to admit that the Duke de Chartres' children were well educated; and the two that still survive attest the excellent system of the governess.

We had this year an august visit from the son of Catherine II. of Russia and his wife, who assumed the travelling title of Count and Countess du Nord. This prince, of whom I have personally so good cause to complain when Paul I.—was remarkably ugly, but possessed some little particles of politeness: in fact, he was a half-licked bear, as Montesquiou expressed it. The countess, who was a large, well made woman, possessed a noble and conciliatory physiognomy. Beneath this she carefully concealed the ambition by which she was always devoured, well aware that Catherine would never have pardoned such a feeling.

Although such visits are frequently sources of embarrassment to those whom they honour, we acquitted ourselves of the duties of hospitality in a satisfactory manner to our illustrious guests. I ought to have previously recorded the twenty-four hours' visit to Paris of Joseph II. the year preceding, which only tended

to injure the queen, as it was alleged he came to concert with her a secret plan for an alliance against the Turks.

The disasters of our navy, under the command of Counts de Guichen and de Grasse, necessitated the call for considerable funds. In order to stimulate the public to assist, the Count d'Artois and I subscribed a joint purse to fit out a vessel of the first class at our own expense. The impulse thus given was propagated. The provinces, the towns, and corporations imitated our example. There was a general enthusiasm, the honour of which belonged to me, as I had first suggested the idea.

The Count d'Artois afterwards departed to serve with the Duke de Bourbon at the siege of Gibraltar, conducted by France and Spain conjointly. The destructive effect of the English batteries defeated the object, and gave no opportunity for my brother to display his petulant

valour, which evaporated in parade evolutions, and magnificent banquets; so that it was said that the only effective battery in the French armament was the Count d'Artois' "*batterie de cuisine*." Accordingly on his return he was saluted with pasquinades instead of acclamations. Princes should never appear in enterprises wherein victory is not the certain result, as all ill success is sure to disvalue them permanently in public estimation.

I may here notice the death of the Duchess de Phalaris, a lady who had played an important part sixty years before, as mistress of the Regent Duke d'Orleans. That prince expired in her arms in 1723, and gave occasion to a Dutch gazetteer to say that he had died of a stroke of *paralysis*, while attended by his ordinary confessor. Madame de Phalaris, whose long career had enabled her to see and record much, wrote her memoirs, which have not been published. I know that they contain some

very curious details respecting the reign of Louis XV.

Since 1760, Count Louis de Narbonne, son of the Duchess de Narbonne Lara, had been brought up at court with as much exclusive distinction as if he formed part of the royal family. The queen was at first equally attached to him; but he lost her favour subsequently by following in the train of Madame de Stael, the daughter of Necker. At the beginning of the revolution he was war minister. When he emigrated he was ill received by the other emigrants, and returning to France attached himself to Bonaparte, who appointed him ambassador to Vienna. He was a conciliatory and deserving man, and it is probable if he had not died before my restoration, I should have accepted his services.

There had been whispers, for some time, of the derangement of the affairs of the Prince de Guéméné, who surpassed in extravagance of

living the luxurious disbursements even of the royal family. The wife imitated the prodigality of her husband ; she had magnificent equipages, gave splendid fêtes, and eclipsed all the females of the court, even the queen herself, by the sumptuous costliness of her dress. His fortune, large as it was, could not maintain such an outgoing : and accordingly he raised loans, hand over head, at high usury and by mortgage.

It was generally thought that such a state of things could not last ; but the greatest enemies of the family could not have ventured to predict the ruinous catastrophe which was preparing.

I was on the point of rising from dinner one day, when Montesquiou, who had just arrived at Paris, took me aside, and said, “ You may offer your congratulations, monseigneur, to-night to the Duchess de Polignac.”

“ On what account ?” I asked.

"The Prince de Guémené is bankrupt. The crash has occurred this morning."

"Ah! ah!" said I, "every body to his trade; but is there no trick in it? Besides, I don't see what it has to do with our friend the duchess."

"Nothing in the world; only she will have the post of governess to the heir-apparent."

"You are right I see, Montesquiou. We must confess that the Polignacs are very lucky people."

We conversed some time respecting this affair, which was really disgraceful to the Rohan family, especially when the whole transaction was made public. The claims amounted to thirty millions, and the prince had not half the sum wherewith to pay it.

The Duke de Lauzun was involved by it to the amount of his whole fortune; the Marquis de Villette lost an income of thirty thousand livres out of his; and a multitude of other

persons were among the victims for sums more or less considerable. Consternation was at its height. The king, in the first transport of his indignation, forbade the prince to appear in his presence; and learning that the princess was equally to blame, he excluded her from court, and ordered her to resign her post.

Madame de Marsan was then seen straining every nerve to save the most valuable relic of the wreck for herself; but the queen would have nothing to do with her claim. The reign of the Rohan family was on the point of terminating. From that moment they united with all the other enemies of Marie-Antoinette to do her all the mischief they could; especially after the mysterious affair of the loss of the diamond necklace.

Efforts were made by several other ladies to obtain the post; but the queen had already determined to confer it on the Duchess de Polignac. There were, however, some obstacles in the way, raised by the favourite herself, her

friends having induced her to fear that its duties would prevent her living on her usual close intimacy with the queen. The coolness, therefore, with which she received the latter's overture, excited her surprise and dissatisfaction : a quarrel ensued : which was only reconciled by Madame de Polignac writing to the queen, explaining the real motive of her disinclination.

A reply was quickly returned : I obtained a copy of it, and here it is :—

“ C'est donc moi qui ai eu tort ! quoi ! vous sacrifiez la charge de gouvernante à la crainte d'être moins souvent auprès de ma personne ! J'aurais dû le deviner à votre attachement ; mais, rassurez-vous, ces fonctions ne nous sépareront pas ; seulement, au lieu de venir chez la reine, c'est la reine qui ira chez la gouvernante. Mandez-moi vite si cela peut vous convenir. Adieu ; tout est oublié, et tout sera fini lorsque vous m'aurez dit : J'accepte.”

Madame de Polignac *deigned* to accept the favour: and her husband was kind enough to supply her place in the office of superintendent of the queen's household. This lucky family never lost an opportunity of advantage. They furthermore got the appropriation of the rich crown lands in Garonne, and the Barony of Fene-strange, with a revenue of several millions to support its dignity. I may have an additional word or two to say on this subject.

CHAPTER XVII.

The singer Garat—Dispute of the Count de Provence with the Queen—Disgrace of M. Amelot—The Baron de Breteuil—M. de Calonne—His portrait—Mot of the Duke d'Ayen—Joy at the Palace—Portrait of M. de Vaudreuil—His quarrel with M. de Castries—First Performance of the Marriage de Figaro—M. de Conzié—Bishop d'Arras—The King of Sweden's Visit to Versailles—He displeases the King—The reception of the Royal Family by the Public—The Author's remarks—Birth of the Dauphin—Fatal augury—Apposite quotation.

THE winter passed gaily. The balls were magnificent. We had at court the younger Garat, since the celebrated singer. This virtuoso, self-opinionated with his merit, had no idea of making his appearance at Versailles like a common

performer. He was a worthy scion of the bourgeoisie, who rather wished to enact the part of grand seignor, than to give up any part of his professional dignity. So much so, that when the first overtures were made to him to attend the queen's concerts, he replied by a positive refusal. The queen, however, was so resolved to hear him, that a mediator was employed in the person of M. de Vaudreuil, and after the exertion of some address, Garat condescended to appear at court. The queen sent her own carriage with six horses and her livery servants to bring him to Versailles. Fond as I am of good music, I did not push my enthusiasm so far as to make myself one of the retinue of the young Bordeaux songster's court. I therefore stayed at home with the countess. The next day the queen did all she could to make me regret my absence.

"You would have been in raptures," said her majesty.

"Ah, madam," I replied, "I am not so

happy as to be so easily thrown into a state of rapture." I saw by the queen's face that this simple answer was not agreeable.

"And yet," she replied, "music has charms to soothe the most savage breast."

"I trust, madame," I rejoined, "at least that the music of Garat has produced nothing but *kind feelings* to every one at court."

The queen, I believe, took the meaning of my expression, and quitted me directly after.

I afterwards heard the musician; and was certainly much pleased with him; but I limited myself to a moderate expression of my admiration, instead of swelling the number of the musical fanatics.

M. Amelot was one of those ministers, who, in point of average talent, are plenty as blackberries, and at the same time did not appear out of place in the ministry, or his deficiency passed unnoticed. M. Amelot was more adapted for the pursuit of pleasure than business:

and having little interest at court, he only retained his post till some one better was to be had. In fact, the queen, wishing to have a ministry devoted to her, decided that the Baron de Breteuil should have his place. The baron had induced her to believe that he was totally absorbed in devotion to her interests, while, in fact, selfishness was his leading characteristic; but he had the address to conceal it, and hence proceeded the queen's error.

He was not deficient in ability; but he injured his merit by a pride and obstinacy before which he required that every thing should bend or be broken. A perfect tyrant in his opinions, resistance rendered him furious: he never doubted possessing resources for every exigency; obstacles only excited his astonishment, and prompted him to violent steps, which terminated in injury to the state. This was the man whom the queen had the misfortune to invest with her entire confidence at the epoch of the revolution.

On him our destiny hung. He was incapable of sustaining so heavy a responsibility; and in attempting to oppose a powerless dyke to the revolutionary torrent, he was swept away by it. He then emigrated in order to pursue the same system, and to play the part of king of France without any authority for the assumption. He dared to brave me to my face, and to intrigue against me with an impudence which the house of Austria encouraged, with the hope of paralyzing the measures (I am justified in saying wise measures) which I took to stifle the first revolutionary convulsions.

The baron, however, did not become my enemy till after the affair of the necklace, in consequence of my having broken my usual reserve in order to condemn the revengeful measures he had recommended against the Cardinal de Rohan.

But before this substitution of M. de Breteuil for M. Amelot, M. d'Ormesson had re-

signed the comptroller-generalship to M. de Calonne. This latter minister, who was destined to aggravate all the errors committed by royalty, united to a considerable share of wit, a brilliant eloquence, and great facility of labour. Endowed with the loftiest conceptions, he united the most opposite qualifications. Gallant to the fair sex, prudent in council, skilful in resources, anxious to please every body, never refusing any thing, and granting more than was necessary, he became the idol of the court up to the moment when he became the detestation of the people.

Having risen successively from the post of *avocat general* in the provincial council of Artois to that of *intendant* of Metz and Lille, and his reputation increasing at every step of his progress, the queen had a wish to be made acquainted with him. His talents pleased her : he promised great things ; the receipt of immense revenues without any difficulty ; and, in

short, by those seductive promises, which he had the address to invest with the colours of truth, he succeeded in making a conquest of the queen's high opinion.

M. de Calonne, to the great grief of numerous competitors, thus became minister of finance. The parliament saw his promotion with dissatisfaction, and from their opposition sprung the greater number of those evils which subsequently overwhelmed us.

The court soon perceived to what extent the favour of the new comptroller general was likely to proceed, as shortly after his installation he was appointed a minister of state. And, indeed, his *débüt* was the more favourably received, as he succeeded two men without talents, and we had not yet forgotten the greedy rusticity of Necker. The Duke d'Ayen, to whom all the *bon-mots* of the day were attributed as a matter of course, said, in speaking of Calonne, "Here indeed is a financial con-

juror who understands the agreeable *hocus poeas* of emptying all the world's pockets, in order to fill those of our worthy friends at court."

The appointment of Calonne caused a complete metamorphosis at Versailles. All faces wore smiles; hope visited all hearts; and the future exhibited nothing but the most auspicious hues of good fortune. This infatuation was, in fact, one of those cruel delusions, which were destined to aggravate the character of our subsequent calamities.

A court martial was about to sit upon the Count de Grasse. The Marquis de Vaudreuil was implicated, and his family, whose influence was great, intrigued to the utmost in order to prevent it from being held. On the other hand, the Marquis de Castries resolved that it should. This resolution was of course unsatisfactory to the Count de Vaudreuil, who did his utmost to induce him to change it, and finding his labour lost, expressed himself with so much warmth

and bitterness, that M. de Castries complained to the king that he was treated with disrespect as one of his ministers. M. de Vaudreuil then dismissing all reserve, replied that no one could have a better memory on the subject of his office than himself, since he had obtained it through the exertion of his favour with the queen.

“If I thought so,” replied the minister, “I would resign directly; for I should never be satisfied with having obtained it through so unworthy an intervention.”

Interest kept M. de Vaudreuil silent; but he indemnified himself by hastening to make his complaints to Marie-Antoinette and Madame de Polignac. I do not know who supplied Baron de Bezenval with the portrait of this gentleman, but it is so striking a resemblance, that I cannot help quoting it here.

M. de Vaudreuil had an agreeable person; but never was mortal subject to such violent fits of passion. Whether at play, at the chase, or

in conversation, the smallest opposition made him beside himself. His anger was less the result of irritable temperament, than an overweening self-love, which never referred to any thing but the trifles of society, and rendered his excitation the more intolerable. The creature of vehement impulse, he never admired but with enthusiasm, or condemned without excess; yet vague and unsettled in his conceptions, he abandoned his opinions with as much facility as he entertained them. There was nothing attractive in his conversation; but he was not deficient in correct discrimination when not warped by prejudice. A frequent spitting of blood, and indifferent health, rendered him hypochondriac and low-spirited; but all these bad qualities were compensated by some of an excellent description. He was constant and generous in friendship; full of magnanimity, sincerity, and attachment; and of so consummate an integrity, that it made him occasionally too

inflexible to those who exhibited any deficiency in the same good quality.

Such was the man who succeeded the Duke de Coigny in the queen's friendship, till the period when the Swedish ambassador, Count Axel de Fersen, obtained the first place in her affections, after first acquiring her esteem. To say the truth, the boundless attachment of M. de Fersen to the queen, at a time when her most faithful servants had disappeared, demonstrated that she had not been deceived in her selection.

The 27th of April this year, Beaumarchais succeeded at length in bringing out the *Marriage of Figaro*, at the *Theatre Française*. Never were so many obstacles thrown in the way of any drama before. If it triumphed over them, it owed its triumph wholly to the good will of those who were interested in preventing its performance. The king alone had the good sense to see the drift of this witty conspiracy against the permanence of social order. As for me, I

certainly was less severe; I had been pleased with the private reading of it at my house and took it under my protection. The troubles which Beaumarchais suffered in consequence are known: as well as the high price at which he purchased his success. I attended the first representation, and the wit of the author gilded the pill of his sarcastic licentiousness.

Among those who distinguished themselves by their opposition to the *Marriage of Figaro*, was one who was then intriguing to deprive the Bishop of Autun of his list of benefices. This was M. de Conzié, Bishop of Arras; one who would have sold his soul for the benefit of his body; intrigue was his only forte; but on this occasion he marred every thing by his ignorance and impetuosity; he might have been a decent bishop, but it was impossible to consider him as a wise man or a statesman.

We had another royal visit this year. The king of Sweden, Gustavus III., returned to

France under the name of Count de Haga. At his former visit, Louis XV. had confided to him the secret of his bold *coup de maitre*, which in 1772, restored him that plenitude of royal authority which the states general of France had successively wrested from his ancestors. This prince, who was enterprizing, brave, and daring, was endowed with extraordinary beauty of person. Strange reports were propagated about him; however, we were pleased at his visit. The queen, I know not why, took it into her head to exhibit the sullens, and received him coldly. The malicious monarch, who perceived it, resolved to be revenged, but he might have exhibited more gallantry in gratifying his resentment.

At a concert given by the queen, at which she sang a duett with the Viscountess de la Rochelambert, who united an exquisite voice to a charming person, her majesty asked Count de Haga if he was gratified.

“ Ah, madame,” replied the prince, “ how is it possible to hear Madame de la Rochelambert and be otherwise.”

Dancing commenced afterwards ; and the queen declining to take part in this amusement, the count approached her, and with an affectation of good-humoured politeness, which rendered his expression the more cutting, said to Marie-Antoinette, “ Was your majesty fond of dancing in your *younger days* ?”

“ Yes, count,” she replied, “ and I am partial to it now.”

A woman seldom forgives an ungallant insinuation. Accordingly one day, when the king of Sweden came unceremoniously to invite himself to dinner, she ordered Madame Campan, who told me the anecdote, to go and learn from her *maitre d'hotel*, whether he could make any provision for the reception of the Count de Haga.

The queen accused the king of Sweden of disliking women. That is an offence which he

inherited from from his predecessors, Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. He was overwhelmed with reproaches on this subject, to which he only replied by a laugh. Louis XVI. thought him very agreeable ; however, he felt embarrassed in his presence. This was the result of the double fear with which we had been inoculated from our cradle ; that of doing too much, or that of not doing enough. The desire to preserve the dignity of our rank, and yet to appear affable, rendered us awkward and constrained in our demeanour. However, I succeeded, by means of my habit of reflecting on every thing, in getting rid of this ridiculous timidity, without, at the same time, losing sight of the dignity becoming a prince.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Reception of M. de Montesquiou at the Academic Françoise—Anecdote of the Jewel Chamber—Reflections of the King of Sweden on the Nobility—Insolence of the younger Vestris—Prince Henry of Prussia's visit to France—The Count de Provence mystifies the Parisians—Elastic shoes for walking on the water—The Harpy—Success of this hoax—Panurge in the Isle of Lanterns—The Count wishes to be well with the Queen—She purchases St. Cloud—Marie-Antoinette's quarrel with the Count de Provence—In what manner he turns it to advantage—The reconciliation—Loan of one hundred and twenty millions—How disposed of—Birth of the Dauphin—Fatal omen connected with it—M. de Montesquiou's interpretation—Apposite quotation.

M. DE MONTESQUIOU having been installed a member of the Academy, the Count de Haga, who had attended the ceremony, supped the same evening with the new academician at my

house. On this occasion he related with animation many particulars of the celebrated day when he *de facto* ascended the throne of his ancestors, by limiting the despotic authority of the senate and the states general. A trivial circumstance, it seems, was on the point of wrecking the whole enterprize at the very moment when he was to quit his chamber in order to make his appearance before the people. He entered a private cabinet where valuable jewellery was kept, for the purpose of supplying himself with a pair of proof pistols, with which he wished to be provided in case of necessity. The door of this closet closed with a spring-lock on the individual who entered it, in such a manner, that the person within side could not re-open it. The object was a precaution of security in case of robbery. This cabinet had no other issue but by the above treacherous door; but the king, in order to avoid such an accident happening to himself, had placed a bell-pull in

the room, which communicated with a bell in his bedchamber.

He proceeded therefore to the jewel closet, and absorbed in reflections on the coming events of the day, forgot on entering to discharge the bolt, so as to prevent the spring lock closing on him. Accordingly, he had scarcely passed the threshold when the sudden click of the closing spring apprized him that he was caught in his own toils. However, thinking of the bell, he did not disturb himself much, but looking for the bell-cord, by the aid of his light, jerked it with so much force that it remained in his hand. The spring of the bell was broken. The grievous dismay of the king may be conceived. There was he shut up in a secluded apartment, where nobody would expect him to be, at the very critical moment when the troops and the court expected his presence, and when the revolution itself depended on his opportune appearance. He was seized with a violent fit of des-

pair; suicide presented itself to his thoughts; and he was on the point of executing the suggestion, when he heard a voice calling him; it was that of his valet de chambre, who, disturbed by his non-appearance, was searching him in all directions. The King of Sweden was saved: the door of his prison was set open. "I embraced my liberator," he said, "to whom I was indebted for more than life, and made him a rich recompence. Had I remained a few minutes longer I should have lost the golden opportunity, and continued till now the abject slave of my own subjects."

The king of Sweden shuddered at nothing but the recollection of the peril he had then run: quite unprophetic of the terrible fate that was in store for him—that of perishing by the hand of a base assassin: and Louis XVI,—the virtuous Louis XVI.—still more unhappy, was destined to bow his royal head beneath the axe of the executioner. How often, since this

double catastrophe, have I not recollected the days, when both, united at Versailles, enjoyed the flight of hours characterized by every kind of pleasure. But during these moments of illusive enjoyment, while the tranquil imagination of Louis XVI. was darkened by no evil augury of the future, the more prophetic sagacity of Gustavus foresaw the fate which awaited him. Often did he say to us, "The hatred of the nobility is implacable; it sleeps at present; but only to render its waking moment the more terrible. I shall be its first victim."

The King of Sweden was the cause of a distinguished mystification, which the queen had to bear with. The younger Vestris, the celebrated dancer, refused to appear on the stage, at the request of Marie-Antoinette, one evening that she was at the theatre with his Swedish majesty, and that she wished to gratify him with an exhibition of that dancer's light heels. Meanwhile, the rebellious king of the dance, in order

still more to manifest his refractory disaffection, amused himself with cutting pirouettes in the coulisses. The insult deserved a severe castigation ; but the culprit was only confined for a few days to *La Force*.

The Count de Haga was succeeded on his departure, on the 1st of July, by Prince Henry, brother to the King of Prussia, who pleased the philosophers as much as he displeased the court : and we could not help asking each other when it would please Heaven to cure of their travelling mania, these monarchs and princes, who came successively to disturb our domestic arrangements, while we manifested no inclination in the world to interfere with theirs.

For my part, I had not far to go to seek materials for amusement ; and there was one I enjoyed greatly, which I took the liberty of renewing more than once—that of hoaxing the unexampled credulity of the Parisians : a credu-

lity which they carried so far, that they might be easily made to swallow the most extravagant absurdities.

I was remarking on this before a numerous society, assembled at my house, and I alleged that I would make the good inhabitants of Paris believe something pre-eminently absurd, without even taking the trouble to ascertain whether it was true or not. My opinion was respectfully contested—for self-love is even stronger than adulation—and, put to my mettle, I undertook to be as good as my word.

A short time after, a watchmaker of Lyons announced to the Parisians, by means of the *Journal de Paris*, that he would walk across the Seine from the Tuileries to the Quai d'Orsai, by the aid of elastic pumps without wetting his feet; but that he required, as a condition, that he should find five hundred livres, if I recollect rightly, on the opposite bank. The advertisement had hardly appeared, when a ge-

néral anxiety manifested itself to see the miracle of the Son of God repeated before the public eye. I pretended to do as others did, in order to snare my opponents with more effect. All was bustle. Some brought their ten louis, some their twenty—including the queen, the Count d'Artois, and all the good folks of the palace. To these illustrious contributors were added numbers of the rich Parisians; and the subscription list was soon complete.

Curiosity, in the meanwhile, rose to its height to witness the curious experiment of M. ——. Information was eagerly sought of the day when it was to take place; the time was at last fixed; and a large crowd assembled, full of eager expectation of the miracle. But the miracle worker remained invisible. In fact, he existed only in my imagination, and unfortunately it was not in my power to satisfy every body, by really making him walk on the water in the way I had described. At length, after the expiration of

a little more time, the mystification began to be suspected, and I did not fail to have my joke at those who were caught in my trap. There was no way of escaping from the admission that my opponents had been dupes: but like the heroes of the worthy Fontaine, they all swore that they would not be taken in a second time; while I, on my side, resolved not to confine myself next time to so limited a chastisement of credulity.

A few months elapsed; at length a report was spread in the palace that an engraving accompanied with a highly interesting description, was circulated in Paris. This engraving represented a newly discovered monster, of which I invented the description. I described it as an amphibious animal, born in the Lake Fagna, near Santa Fé, in Chili; eleven feet long, a scaly body, with a face like a man; horns like a bull; ears of the size of a jackass; mouth cleft from ear to ear; wings like a bat; and two

tails, one flexible in order to seize its prey, and the other terminating in a sting like a dart, in order to destroy it, &c. &c. This newly discovered species of animal, which I concluded my description with suggesting, appeared to be that of the harpies of old, was sent as a present to the king of Spain, and had just arrived at Cadiz.

The coarse *daubery* of this description and its gross improbability, did not in the least awaken the suspicion of the credulous Parisians, from the highest to the lowest. The monster was accepted as a reality, and dished up in various new forms. Even fashion availed itself of the mania, and hats and colours made their appearance *a la harpie*. The vulgar gaped and believed; the Savans prepared dissertations; some of them indeed went so far as to recommend a scientific commission for examining the phenomenon to be sent to Cadiz; but not a single voice was heard to attempt undeceiving the multitude, so effectual was the triumph of the

harpy. I confess that I had some difficulty in concealing my exultation at this exploit, which so far exceeded the preceding; for, in fact, the deception was far too flimsy and obvious to catch any person of reflection. On the discovery of the hoax, there were indeed some individuals so ill-conditioned as to express displeasure; but I only laughed at them the more.

In those untroubled days of happy ease, I had no other pastime than such jokes as the above; writing verses, or sketching passages of lyrical works, which the public applaudingly attributed to whomever would consent to be the presumptive father.

I occasionally exerted myself to be on good terms with the queen, whom her intimates never ceased to prejudice against me. There were plenty of persons to concoct the quarrels, while I stood alone in re-adjusting them; and when tranquillity was restored, it was only the calm that precedes a new storm. One sure method my ene-

mies employed to excite the queen against me, was to allege that I condemned her *expendituré*, and the choice of her amusements.

We had one painful altercation on the subject of a purchase made for her by the king—that of St. Cloud, which previously belonged to the Duke of Orleans. This useless purchase, (useless, since the queen had already refused Grand Trianon,) cost fourteen millions. This was rather exorbitant, under the circumstances of the country, when, in order to meet the most pressing claims, it had just been decided to borrow a hundred millions on loan. However, I deemed it my province to be silent, but as there are always slanderers base enough to attribute words to you which you never dreamt of, it was pretended that I had openly condemned the king's purchase; and when I went to pay my respects to Marie-Antoinette, I found her reception cold and reserved. Determined to find out the cause of this coolness, I asked

her if she was unwell, her situation (she was then *enceinte*) authorizing the inquiry.

“ I cannot be otherwise,” she replied, “ considering the blame I am subjected to for every thing I do.”

This was an indirect attack ; but I resolved to obtain a clearer explanation, in order to have the opportunity of justifying myself if I had been accused.

“ If your complaint applies to me, madame,” I replied, “ I feel that I am entitled to demand explanation ; since otherwise I should be accused without the permission to defend myself.”

“ I can readily satisfy you,” replied the queen ; “ and I do not think you are a man to belie your own words. Individuals of credit have assured me that you have complained that I and my retinue consume half the revenue of the state in idle caprices.”

I perceived the advantage which my sister-

in-law gave me ; and I lost no time in seizing it, by saying, “ Since your majesty assures me that you have been informed so by persons *on whom you can rely*, it would not be proper for me to deny it. The fact should be proved ; and I now appeal to you, madame, to name the persons who heard me use the alleged expressions. I think I am entitled to demand this ; the more so as I consider Marie-Antoinette more equitable than Thémis herself, and that divinity never condemns unheard.

“ Name them !” replied the queen in an embarrassed tone : “ I cannot, for I pledged myself to ——”

“ To protect the libellers in their calumny. Your majesty has too much right-mindedness for that. Moreover, as I hesitate not to charge, with direct falsehood, those who have not hesitated to blacken my character to you, I must insist on being confronted with them, in order more effectually to unmask them.”

“ I entreat you not to urge me any more,” replied Marie-Antoinette, colouring; “ I am bound by an express promise not to disclose names.”

“ Then, madame, permit me to say you give me just title to complain. Efforts are made to undermine me in your friendship; you refuse me the common means of defence against accusation. I am therefore compelled to protest solemnly that I never used the expressions ascribed to me. I know sufficiently what I owe to your majesty, and what I owe to myself, in expressing myself in so unqualified a manner. My enemies, who in the long run will be found to be yours also, have an interest in creating a dissension between us. They are very blameable; and permit me to say, madame, that you are also blameable in lending so ready an ear to their unproved imputations.”

I was really affected while I said this; the queen perceived it, and stammered something of

an apology, which by no means satisfied me ; and I replied that I could not suffer the matter to rest where it was, but should appeal to the king. I had no serious intention of injuring the queen in his estimation by doing so ; but I wished to ascertain whether she had herself accused me to my brother. However, I found that she had not, and her majesty finally assured me that she felt she had been deceived, and that she would make a point of showing her feeling by demonstrating her contempt and indignation to those who had imposed on her ; and that she hoped we should be good friends from that time. I inclined my head to kiss her hand, but the queen prevented the formality of that action, and embraced me with a graceful cordiality, as a pledge of reconciliation.

This reconciliation lasted more than a year ; and I hoped there was now an end to our quarrels ; but at the beginning of 1785 a new train of intrigues, to my great sorrow, succeeded in destroying our good understanding.

The year 1785 began by a loan of a hundred and twenty-five millions. This was a mortgage of the nation's future resources, which M. de Calonne alleged to be necessary to meet present demands. The measure was highly popular at the court ; but the rest of the kingdom did not view it in the same fascinating light. It is true there may be this reason for the difference of opinion, —that all the world at court had a share in the booty. They divided it, like good brothers, share and share alike. Things were rather different then from what they are now.

The queen happily gave birth, on the 27th of March, 1785, at five minutes before seven in the evening, to a prince, named Louis Charles, who took the title of Duke of Normandy. This was my unfortunate nephew whose reign commenced and ended in chains, under the name of Louis XVII., and to whom I succeeded while in exile. Providence destined him to receive the crown of martyrdom in heaven, as

an equivalent for his early trials, which he bore with equal heroism and resignation. From his birth he gave symptoms of vigorous health, which announced the probability of a long life; but the executioners of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette had decided that this young flower should be prematurely subjected to the sickle.

The birth of this prince was distinguished by a peculiarity little remarked at the time, but which I have often recollected since. At the bolster of the state bed of the queen there was a crown, which formed a portion of its ornaments. This crown detached itself at the very moment when Vermont pronounced the customary words, "The queen is about to be delivered;" and rolling towards the couch where Marie-Antoinette lay, was broken to pieces.

I was struck with the accident, and spoke of it to Montesquiou, who piqued himself on his

capacity to expound dreams and omens, and replied, "The new-born babe will be a king, but only for a short time."

"And what then?"

"He will, after that, monseigneur, leave no posterity."

"Well?"

"You are aware, monseigneur, who is the person whom the Salic law appoints for his successor."

"You have lost your senses, Mr. Astrologer."

"Be it so: but you cannot complain, since you have my predictions for nothing. However, permit me to hope, monseigneur, that if this last should be realized, it may be considered worthy of a good compensation."

To this I replied by a hearty laugh. I only relate this circumstance, not as substantiating the truth of omens, but as a curious coincidence. Some of the strongest minds attach importance

to things which merit it the least, so prone is man to superstition. Lucretius has pictured this weakness of humanity with a master's hand:

. . . Veluti pueri trepidant, atque omnia cæcis
In tenebris metuunt, sic non in luce timemus,
Interdum nihilo quæ sunt metuenda magis, quàm
Quæ pueri in tenebris pavitant fugruntque futura.

END OF VOL. II.



